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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF BUREAUCRACY: PUBLIC SERVANTS' PERSPECTIVE

BY ©

REAL L. GAGNE

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1994

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF BUREAUCRACY: PUBLIC SERVANTS' PERSPECTIVE submitted by Real L. Gagne in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

Professor Ian Urquhart

Professor Linda Trimble

Professor Allan Warrack

April 5th, 1994

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the issue of democratic control of bureaucracies. The hypothesis is that the attitudes of bureaucrats in the United States about political control of bureaucracies described by Judith Gruber are not shared by their Canadian counterparts.

The thesis considers how political leaders can control public policy. It examines concepts and arguments as well as several cases of bureaucratic insubordination. It focuses on the concrete realities of the interactions between bureaucrats on the one hand and politicians and citizens on the other. What emerges is that bureaucracies sometimes evade political direction when it is in their interests to do so.

The public servants surveyed as part of the research for this thesis saw political control as appropriate in setting the general agendas of government, but not as extending to administrative or operational matters. They did not support the notion of direct public participation in government, or they approved of it with reservations. They also saw the politician's primary role as being to help his or her constituents. A majority believed that politicians do act in the public interest, or attempt to do so most of the time. A similar majority believed that the average citizen lacks the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions with respect to public policy. Most asserted that they have a significant influence on the development of public policy. Virtually all said they were highly committed to serving the public.

The survey results do not support the hypothesis advanced. Canadian and American administrators share beliefs about the role of the politician and citizen in government. The results do, however, support the hypothesis in terms of their differing views about their own role in public policy development and in the capacity of politicians to serve the public good.

The thesis recommends that the role of the bureaucracy in public policy-making be clarified, including functions, accountabilities, and protections. It also suggests that governments should change both legislation and administrative practices to allow for greater public participation in government. Finally, it calls for politicians and citizens to appeal to the commitment to serving the public exposed in the survey.

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CHAPTER ONE

Democratic Control and Bureaucratic Power: the Issue

A. Introduction

This thesis examines the question of democratic control of bureaucracies. The hypothesis I advance is that the attitudes of bureaucrats in the United States about Societal and direct political control of their activities described by Judith Gruber[1] are not shared by their Canadian counterparts. In other words, Canadian public servants are more ready to accept political and societal control than are American bureaucrats.

In preparing this thesis I have reviewed a selection of relevant literature and conducted a survey of twenty-five public servants in Alberta, all of whom have occupied positions of influence in the formulation of public policy, either as administrative decision makers in their own right or as senior advisors to others who were. Included in the survey were representatives from the federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government. A copy of the questionnaire used in this survey is attached as Appendix A to this document.

This thesis focuses on the interaction between politicians and citizens on the one hand and bureaucrats on the other. Related issues will not be considered. For example, this thesis will not examine the roles and functions of bureaucracy; nor will it deal with matters involving bureaucratic processes, including things like internal controls or the representativeness of bureaucracies.

Furthermore, this essay is not an exercise in what is often called "bureaucrat bashing." Nor is it my sole purpose to disparage bureaucracies as institutions or to castigate the behaviour of bureaucrats individually or collectively. The literature is already rich enough with critiques of bureaucracy as an institution without my adding to it.[2] In addition, more than forty years experience as a public servant with all three levels of government in Canada has convinced me that most public servants genuinely want to serve well both their political masters and the public.

On the other hand, I acknowledge that bureaucracies and public servants are widely perceived as being both ineffective and sinister. And that view, while perhaps widely held in Canada today, is certainly not new. For instance, writing more than a century ago, Walter Bagehot said that: "It is an inevitable defect, that bureaucrats will care more for routine than for results;...."[3] Stripped of the idiom of his time, that sentiment echoes current opinion of the ineffectiveness of bureaucracies. Hummel's dictum that "institutions have now been proven not to be human,...."[4] represents the notion that bureaucracies are somehow sinister. Pfister is even more specific in denouncing what he perceives as the perfidy of the French bureaucracy when he says: "Et pourtant, la classe politique française est moin corrompue qu'on ne le murmure et l'administration plus qu'on ne le croit."[5] And Mitchell and Scott, quoting Fiorina, note that in the U.S. most people consider bureaucrats to be "'deceptive,' 'disingenuous,' 'wasteful,' 'crooked,' 'paternalistic' and 'crazy."[6] For Canada, Zussman tells us that the public believes that civil servants are "overpaid, know only their own jobs,...are not intelligent, lack courtesy, and are not very honest."[7] Both my conviction that most public servants are sincere and hard working, and the acknowledgement that a significant number of Canadians think otherwise, form part of the intellectual perspective that I bring to this exercise.

In this chapter, I shall begin with a brief exploration of why the issue of democratic control of bureaucracy is important. That will be followed by a brief definition of democratic control of bureaucracies, a short review of Gruber's analysis of democratic control of bureaucracies, and an explanation of the methodology adopted for my survey of public servants in Alberta. Chapter Two will examine the issue of democratic control of bureaucracy from two broad perspectives: the first will explore concepts and arguments; the second will consider particular cases of contention between politicians and bureaucrats. Chapter Three will explore in detail Gruber's findings about democratic control of bureaucracies. Chapter four will outline the results of the survey of Canadian public servants on the same topic. Chapter Five will consist of observations and conclusions drawn from both the literature and the survey.

B. The Importance of Democratic Control of Bureaucracy

There are many reasons why the issue of democratic control of bureaucracy is important. One is that the state has become, as Banting has noted, "The Modern Leviathan."[8] That is, its roles and responsibilities, driven to some extent by the emergence of the welfare state, have multiplied manyfold since World War II. This has entailed a far greater direct bureaucratic impact on the life of the average Canadian than at any other time in our history. Banting notes, for instance, that there were more regulatory statutes passed by the federal government between 1970 and 1978 than in the previous three decades and that a third of all provincial regulatory statutes in 1978 were enacted after 1960.[9] This means that the bureaucracy, as the implementation arm of the state, has acquired a far greater importance than it had in the earlier years of the country's existence, both in terms of its greater impact upon the lives of individual citizens and on the machinery of government as a whole. As Cairns has noted:

> Any prime minister in an established political system...sits atop a pyramid of the policies of many yesterdays, the administration of which is relatively impervious to his or her role as chief executive officer of the modern state.[10]

Other commentators, such as Kernaghan and Siegel,[11] have argued that bureaucracies have assumed a much more influential role in government, given the thousands of bureaucratic decisions which impact directly or indirectly upon the life of every citizen. It is true that governments at all levels and of all political persuasions have undertaken a number of deregulation initiatives in recent years. The deregulation of the air transport industry in Canada is a case in point. This may have alleviated the problem somewhat but government services (like unemployment insurance, welfare or pension benefits, or business licences) are still subject to virtually impenetrable thickets of regulations. And in those cases where regulatory functions are privatized in some way, (Alberta's decision to privatize its motor licensing branch comes to mind), the only significant difference will be that these functions will then be discharged by a private bureaucracy instead of a public one, but the regulatory requirements remain.

A second important reason to examine the relationship between bureaucrats and politicians is a growing movement for the reform of our administrative institutions. This drive for change is fuelled by a number of factors. As Mascarenhas argues, the pressure for reform comes in large measure as part of a world-wide drive for greater efficiency and for ensuring that public institutions become more responsive to politically elected officials.[12] A second but perhaps less noticeable reason is to be found in the changes generated by technology, particularly the advent of the micro-chip, which radically altered the manner in which most work, including bureaucratic work, is done. This has transformed the organization of work from a hierarchical style dependent on close control to techniques which stress individual initiative. It has also spawned what may be called the entrepreneurial government movement described by Osborne and Gaebler.[13]

In addition, pressure has come from individual citizens as well as from institutions such as business, labour, or interest groups to make government more open and responsive. Since, as Gruber has noted, that for most citizens dealing with government means bargaining with bureaucrats,[14] any move for more open and responsive government must involve the public servants in a significant way. Failing to do so may generate the kind of bureaucratic backlash experienced by the Alberta government.[15] Such clashes are not without their costs to the public. This is not, of course, to argue that duly elected politicians should not govern, but only to suggest that public bureaucracies have, as Gruber asserts,[16] the resources to resist, and in some cases to thwart, what they perceive as attacks by politicians upon their institutions.

Bureaucrats are an integral part of the issue of democratic control of bureaucracy for a variety of reasons. First, they are the ones most affected by any control regime and, as individuals caught up in the system, have the most vital stake in the issue. Second, bureaucrats are the ones who make the day-to-day decisions that give effect to political initiatives and are thus an integral part of the process of governance. Thirdly, as Peters indicates, bureaucracies are not simply administrative structures but the holders and propagators of social values and can often "essentially determine policy."[17] He adds that since bureaucracies are often the repositories of values, bureaucrats will energetically resist any change which threatens those values.[18] And finally, as Gruber has noted, "All strategies for controlling bureaucracies are dependent to some extent on the acquiescence of the bureaucrats involved."[19]

Generally speaking, society controls bureaucracy in two ways. In the first case, citizens elect politicians to govern, and, thus legitimized, the politicians in turn direct the bureaucracy. This subordination of the bureaucracy to the political arm of the state is the principle upon which the Institute of Public Administration of Canada exhorts its members in particular, and public servants in general, to give their primary loyalty to "their political superiors."[20] And, in Galbraith's memorable phrase, it is the 'conventional wisdom'[21] upon which most Canadians agree that the relationship between politicians and public servants ought to be grounded. This may explain why the federal government's Public Service 2000 document (the blueprint for the Mulroney Administration's reorganization of the civil service) stresses that "When all is said and done...in our system ministers are *elected to decide* whereas officials are *appointed to administer and advise*."[22]

The second case involves a somewhat less formal process. Here individual citizens influence bureaucratic decisions through personal interactions with particular bureaucrats, sometimes as members of advisory boards or other formal structures, but more often by informing public servants of their personal views, needs, or preferences. Despite its diffuse nature, this kind of interaction is a form of control[23] and can influence bureaucratic behaviour in some instances.

To the average citizen, control of bureaucracy is not an abstract thing but rather centres on particular and individual concerns. For example, the individual Canadian will ask questions such as: Why is my Unemployment Insurance cheque late? Why can't I sponsor my uncle as a landed immigrant? Or, why am I not eligible for the Old Age Assistance Supplemental Allowance? These brief and anecdotal examples drawn from instances in my own experience as a public servant suggest that in the minds of citizens control is often associated with public service responsiveness. That is, the average individual is not interested in controlling bureaucracies per se. He or she just wants to be served in a timely manner in ways they understand. This perspective is supported by Greene, who notes that citizen-bureaucrat encounters are "primarily concerned with specific problems rather than with policy issues....[and are]...instrumental acts directed at narrow, short-range goals."[24]

C. Democratic Control Defined

For the purposes of this essay, I shall, like Gruber,[25] use the term control to mean a curb or restraint imposed on bureaucrats by either citizens or politicians. In a more restricted sense, I shall also use the term to mean the power or authority of politicians to regulate the behaviour of public officials. In addition, I shall, like Gruber,[26] assume that control involves more than the congruence of views or interests between the public and its elected representatives on the one hand, and individual bureaucrats or bureaucratic agencies on the other. Like her, I begin with the premise that democratic control of bureaucracy involves its imposition by the individual or his or her elected representative.[27] This means the direct intervention by duly elected politicians with a legitimate right of intervention in the activities of those bureaucracies, or direct citizen-bureaucrat interaction which results in changes in bureaucratic action. To sum up, I take the position that control is essentially the ability of either a politician or a citizen to alter the behaviour of a bureaucrat who may not particularly wish to do what either may want him or her to do.

Here I want to distinguish between political control and political direction. Like Gruber, I assume that control means something beyond the congruence of views between the citizens and their elected representatives on the one hand and bureaucrats or bureaucratic agencies on the other.[28] My approach centres around the question of what needs to be done in the event that bureaucrats (through neglect or insubordination) do not carry out the wishes of their political superiors. The issue of control, as I have defined it, comes into play only in cases where the bureaucracy refuses or wilfully neglects to carry out the legitimate wishes of political actors and does not apply otherwise. Political control is not the same as political direction. In the case of political control, sanctions are not only appropriate but necessary. Otherwise, no social control of bureaucratic institutions is possible. Where political direction is involved, sanctions are both inappropriate and unnecessary . Let me illustrate with an example which arguably demonstrates that despite clear direction, there is a lack of political control, or at best only very weak control, over the operations of a public agency. In this case, the Edmonton City Council rejected an alderman's call for disciplinary action against all building inspectors and their supervisors who were found guilty of dereliction of duty by the city's Auditor General.[29] Here the political direction exists by virtue of the Council's by-laws and building codes. I would argue that in this instance adequate political control is lacking, since Council, for whatever reason, chose not to impose sanctions in a case where, if media reports are accurate, a gross dereliction of duty took place.

D. Gruber's Analysis

I have chosen Gruber's analysis of the issue of democratic control of bureaucracy as the backdrop for this thesis because it focuses directly on the concrete realities of the control interactions between bureaucrats on the one hand and politicians and citizens on the other. I shall explore Gruber's views in detail in Chapter Three; in this chapter I shall content myself with a brief summary of her views.

Gruber's analysis is based on interviews with thirty-nine municipal administrators in a city of roughly 125,000 population in the northeast United States. In conducting her interviews she spoke with senior decision-makers in both central office and field operational units. These were people who (according to her) had responsibility and authority; who designed their agencies' programs in the first instance and implemented them when approved by political officials; and who, as she put it, made policy.[30]

Gruber contends that a political decision is of itself seldom enough to ensure bureaucratic compliance[31] and adds that democratic control of bureaucracies involves the imposition of controls by either citizens or their elected representatives. She also argues that congruence between the wishes of citizens or their elected representatives and the actions of bureaucrats does not in itself constitute control, even though the actions or decisions of bureaucrats are, in fact, competent, professional, and otherwise satisfactory to both citizen and politician.[32] She also notes that the kinds of control that should be placed on public bureaucracies depends to a large extent on whether one views government as a means of achieving substantive ends or of protecting individual liberties. If it is the former, the controls should be on the substance of bureaucratic decisions; if the latter is true, procedural controls are appropriate.[33]

Ever the pragmatist, Gruber argues that there are costs associated with controlling bureaucracies. She identifies two kinds of such costs: effectiveness costs and enforcement costs. She says that effectiveness costs arise when the imposed controls prevent or undermine the bureaucrat's ability to do his or her job and that enforcement costs result from efforts to guarantee bureaucratic compliance with political direction.[34] Gruber also notes that controls acceptable to bureaucrats are more likely to succeed[35] and that procedural controls are much more easily enforced than substantive ones.[36] Gruber reminds us that bureaucrats do have power and resources and will use them to block control efforts by politicians and citizens that threaten their institutions or which they do not approve of.[37] She concludes that bureaucrats do not normally see themselves as part of the process of governance but rather as people doing a job[38] and that the majority of her respondents advocated either a limited role for the public in government or no role at all.[39] Gruber also says that the kind of policy area in which bureaucrats operate will dictate to some extent what kinds of control mechanisms are most likely to succeed.[40] Based on her study, Gruber suggests an exchange model as the most effective way for ensuring democratic control of bureaucracies.[41] What this involves is a reciprocal transaction in which bureaucrats accept some measure of political or citizen control in return for the autonomy and resources they believe they need for the proper discharge of their administrative and operational responsibilities to the public.[42]

E. Survey Methodology

I turn now to a short explanation of the methodology employed in preparing and conducting the survey which forms an integral part of this exercise. The interviews which nourished the survey were carried out over a period of five months from mid-January to early June in 1993. In all, twenty-five individuals participated in the survey. Seventeen are or were employed by the Alberta Government. Another six are employees of the federal government. The remaining two are employed at the municipal level. Of the twenty-five, thirteen are female and twelve are male. Nineteen of the respondents were employed in public agencies which provide a service directly to individuals, although the respondents themselves did not necessarily do so. The remaining six worked in agencies which either support other government departments or agencies or which deal with other public bodies of one kind or another.

In selecting individuals to interview I looked for persons who held positions at the senior manager or director level, or equivalent. The survey did not include deputy ministers or assistant deputy ministers for two reasons. The first is that more has been written about the interaction between politicians and deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers, or positions of equivalent rank and I judged that it would be more interesting to seek the views of individuals occupying another administrative stratum on this question.[43] The second has to do with the nature of the policy development and implementation process itself. Given the nature and complexity of the role of the state in Canadian society, most policy decisions are grounded, at least in part, in a matrix of data. I chose as my respondents individuals whose responsibilities include the analysis and evaluation of such data and the implementation of policy initiatives based on this kind of information.

I initiated the survey process with a telephone call to ask for an interview. At this point, a number of individuals declined. In other instances it was not possible to find a mutually convenient time for the interview. Those who accepted my invitation were written to confirm the date and place of the interview. In that letter I outlined briefly that my purpose was to solicit their views on the issue of democratic control of bureaucracies and, at the request of most, to guarantee them anonymity. A copy of the text of that letter is to be found in Appendix B to this thesis.

On average, the interviews lasted an hour. The shortest lasted forty minutes and the longest just over two hours. Identical questions were asked of each respondent. These questions were based on the questionnaire used by Gruber but are not identical to hers. Indeed, one of the major differences in our approaches is that she veiled her intentions; I did not. In addition, her questionnaire sought more personal information than did mine. This may well result from the fact that she was engaged in an excursion of discovery while my goal was to determine if her findings with respect to the issue of democratic control of bureaucracies could be established in a Canadian setting. This permitted me a more pointed approach. Also, my questions were designed to be as open-ended as possible in terms of the answers provided.

Finally, I recognize that a sample size of twenty-five cannot conclusively support or disprove any hypothesis; nor can it generate conclusions which can be convincingly generalized to a larger cosmos. It can, however, reveal tendencies or, as Gruber suggests, it can be useful in terms of hypothesis generation.[44]

1. Judith E. Gruber, Controlling Bureaucracies: Dilemmas in Democratic Governance, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987).

2. For a rather polemical perspective, see George Roche's America by the Throat, (Old Greenwich, Conn.: Devin-Adair Publishers, 1983). In addition, the chapter entitled "What's Wrong with our Schools?' in Milton and Rose Friedman's Free to Choose is essentially a denunciation of a formal public service, that is, a bureaucracy. A somewhat similar denunciation of bureaucracies--particularly in terms of the hegemony of experts--is to be found in Ivan Illych's "Useful Employment and its Professional Enemies," in his Toward a History of Needs. Ralph Hummel argues that bureaucracies are essentially dehumanizing organizations in his The Bureaucratic Experience, 2nd ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982. And Thierry Phister characterizes the French bureaucracy as rather sinister in his La république des fonctionnaires, Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1988. Literature is replete with examples of anti-bureaucratic satire. Perhaps the most recent and vivid example of this genre is the British Broadcasting Corporation's immensely popular television series, Yes Minister.

3. Walter Bagehot, The English Constitution, Intr. R.H.S. Crossman, M.P. (London: Collins-The Fontana Library, 1963), p. 195.

4. Ralph Hummel, The Bureaucratic Experience, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), p. xi.

5. Thierry Pfister, La république de fonctionnaires, (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1988), p. 100. A rough translation of this passage is: "French politicians are less corrupt than is generally spoken of and bureaucrats more so than is believed."

6. Terrence R. Mitchell and William G. Scott, "Leadership Failures, the Distrusting Public, and Prospects of the Administrative State," in Public Administration Review, Vol. 47, No. 6, November/December, 1987, p. 445.

7. David Zussman, "The Image of the Public Service in Canada," in Canadian Public Administration, Vol. 25, No. 1, 1982, p. 73.

8. Keith Banting, "Images of the Modern State: An Introduction," in State and Society: Canada in Comparative Perspective, Research Coordinator, Keith Banting (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), p. 2.

9. Ibid.

10. Alan Cairns, "The Embedded State: State-Society Relations in Canada," in State and Society: Canada in Comparative Perspective, Research Coordinator Keith Banting (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), p. 69.

11. Kenneth Kernaghan and David Siegel, Public Administration In Canada: A Text, 2nd ed. (Scarborough, Ont.: Nelson Canada, 1991), p. 4. The examples given here of bureaucratic influence on our lives ranges from Canadian content rules for radio programming, farm produce regulations, manufacturing standards, public health ordinances, and the regulation of public monopolies, but they are illustrative only and do not begin to encompass the range and impact of bureaucratic decisions on the lives of individual Canadians.

12. R.C. Mascarenhas, "Reform of the Public Service in Australia and New Zealand," in Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration, Vol. 3, No. 1, January, 1990, p. 76.

13. David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector, (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1992).

14. Gruber, p. 2.

15. Linda Goyette, "Civil servants challenge Klein government's approach to budget cuts," in Edmonton Journal, October 21, 1993, p. A-10. See also Linda Goyette, "Premier Klein could benefit from a free-wheeling public debate," in Edmonton Journal, October 27, 1993, p. A-14, and Rick McConnell, "Civil-servant group to offer alternative to cutbacks," in Edmonton Journal, December 7, 1993.

16. Gruber, p. 24.

17. B. Guy Peters, "The Policy Process: An Institutionalist Perspective," in Canadian Public Administration, Vol. 35, No. 2, 1992, p. 162.

18. Peters, p. 177.

19. Gruber, p. 86.

20. This is taken from the "Statement of Principles Regarding the Conduct of Public Employees" prepared by the Institute of

Public Administration of Canada, p. 205, in Kernaghan and Langford's The Responsible Public Servant, (Halifax and Toronto: The Institute for Resaerch on Public Policy and The Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 1990).

21. John Kenneth Galbraith, The Affluent Society, 2nd. ed. rev. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), p. 8. Here I use the term in the manner which Galbraith uses it, namely, to define a widely acceptable idea or notion. For a fuller treatment of the concept of 'conventional wisdom' see particularly Chapter Two of this work, which is entitled "The Concept of the Conventional Wisdom."

22. Public Service 2000: The Renewal of the Public Service of Canada, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1990), p. 8. Italics in original. This is also a quote from an earlier document entitled Responsibility in the Constitution, (Ottawa: August, 1977), prepared by the Privy Council Office and presented to the Royal Commission on Financial Management and Accountability.

23. This notion is traceable to Gruber's assertion that "What transforms constraint into democratic control is its imposition by a democratic political actor--either the citizens or their elected representatives." p. 12.

24. Kenneth R. Greene, "Municipal Administrators' Receptivity to Citizens' and Elected Officials' Contacts," in Public Administration Review, Vol. 42, No. 4, July/August, 1982, p. 346.

25. Gruber, p. 12.

26. Gruber, p. 16.

27. Gruber, p. 12.

28. Gruber, p. 12.

29. Scott McKeen, "Inspection dept. opens line to handle public concerns," in Edmonton Journal, December 15, 1993, p. B-3.

30. Gruber, pp. 89-90.

31. Gruber, p. 3.

32. Gruber, pp. 12-16.

33. Gruber, pp. 52-54.

34. Gruber, pp. 62-63.

35. Gruber, p. 72.

36. Gruber, p. 73.

37. Gruber, p. 87.

38. Gruber, p. 92.

39. Gruber, p. 96.

40. Gruber, pp. 121-22.

41. Gruber, pp. 210-14.

42. Gruber, pp. 210-13.

43. I offer the following as representative samples: Joel D. Aberbach, Robert D. Putnam, and Bert A. Rockman, *Bureaucrats and Politicians in Western democracies*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981); Jacques Bourgault and Stéphane Dion, "Governments Come and Governments Go, But What of Senior Civil Servants: Canadian Deputy Ministers and Transitions in Power," in *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration*, Vol. 2, No. 2, April, 1989, pp. 26-49; Jacques Bourgault and Stéphane Dion, "Brian Mulroney a-t-il politisé les sous-ministres? in *Canadian Public Administration*, Vol. 32, No.1, 1989, pp. 63-83; Colin Campbell and George Szablowski, *The Superbureaucrats: Structure and Behaviour in Central Agencies*, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1979); André Gélinas, "La commission parlementaire: mécanisme d'imputabilité à l'égard des sous-ministres et des dirigeants d'organismes," in *Canadian Public Administration*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 1984, pp. 372-98; Kenneth Kernaghan, "The Hired Help," in *Policy Options*, September, 1984, pp. 45-48; Gordon Osbaldeston, *Keeping Deputy Ministers Accountable*, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1989); Gordon Osbaldeston, "How Deputies are Accountable," in *Policy Options*, September, 1987, pp. 10-13; Micheline Plasse, "Les chefs de cabinet ministériels du gouvernement fédéral canadien: rôle et relation avec la haute fonction publique," in *Canadian Public Administration*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 1992, pp. 317-38; Mitchell Sharp, "The Role of the Mandarins: The case for a non-partisan public service," in *Policy Options*, Vol. 2, 1981, pp. 43-44; and Ezra N. Suleiman, *Politics, Power, and Bureaucracy in France: The Administrative Elite*, (Princeton,

New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974).

44. Gruber, p. 91.

CHAPTER TWO

Democratic Control and Bureaucratic Power: the Debate

A. Introduction

The control of public bureaucracies has interested many observers. My concern involves questions like: How is the state apparatus to be controlled? and, How do we give the Prime Minister and other political leaders full control over policy? In this chapter I shall examine the literature on this topic from two broad perspectives: the first will focus on concepts and arguments; the second will examine several specific cases of bureaucratic insubordination. In the first instance, I shall draw heavily on the Friedrich-Finer debates of the early 1940's and on Putnam's analysis of bureaucrats and politicians as contending elites.

The Friedrich-Finer debate was waged against the backdrop of what might be termed the traditional public authority view that politicians decide and bureaucrats implement,[1] or what Peters has called the formal model.[2] Putnam's analysis centres on the differing motivations of bureaucrats and politicians.

B. Concepts and Arguments

Very briefly, Friedrich in effect argued for greater bureaucratic autonomy in order to achieve efficiency in government. He stressed two points. The first is that public control of bureaucracies through political bodies is likely to be ineffective in terms of the greater public good. This is because political solutions to social problems developed without regard for what he called "...the sum of human knowledge concerning the technical issues involved;...."[3] would be irresponsible. In modern parlance, what he is referring to is administrative efficiency or professional competence (the realm of the bureaucrat). The second is his contention that policy making and its execution are part of an inseparable process. Taken together, these views entail a significant degree of bureaucratic autonomy. Friedrich did not, it is true, advocate the total absence of political input into public policy making. Indeed, he indicated that it would be equally irresponsible to adopt a policy which was contrary to what he called "popular sentiment."[4] But my reading of his work suggests that he gave this popular sentiment a lighter weight in his argument than that of bureaucratic efficiency. An even more forceful case for bureaucratic autonomy has been advocated by Joseph Schumpeter.[5] All of this may, perhaps, flow from Napoleon Bonaparte's notions about the role of the bureaucracy in the process of governance.[6] What we see in the foregoing examples is a modern variant of the ancient notion of rule by a specially trained elite, something that Dahl says is at least as old as Confucius and Plato and which he calls "guardianship."[7]

On the other hand, the case for stringent political control of bureaucracies was articulated by Finer, who stressed that public servants ought not to decide policy but rather must be answerable to the public to the greatest extent that this is technically possible.[8] Finer also contends that where such control and obedience is lacking, abuses of power by the administration is certain to follow.[9] Finer recognized that technical expertise in the bureaucracy is necessary for sound public administration but argued that such technical expertise needs political direction from both politicians and the public.[10] In summary, his argument is essentially that in a democratic society it is the citizen and the politician who must decide on substantive policy initiatives, not the administrator, no matter how technically competent he or she may be.

Putnam's argument is grounded partly on Weber's notion that two classes of governors exist: professional administrators and equally professional politicians,[11] and on his own premise that they are contending elites for power in government.[12] He adds that, even though some public servants may simply want to follow orders, this is largely a practical impossibility since politicians generally lack the expertise, information, and time to decide on all of the policy questions which arise in the modern state at any time.[13] This, he says, results in a sharing of power between what he refers to as the two "uncertain partners" in governance: the professional bureaucrat and the professional politician.[14]

Putnam notes that bureaucrats are attracted to government particularly by the opportunity to use their knowledge and professional skills to solve practical problems.[15] On the other hand, politicians are interested in influencing public affairs, helping the public or individual citizens, and dealing directly with people.[16] Thus, the bureaucrat looks for professional and intellectual returns; the politician, for the exercise of power and the opportunity to help people. He also stresses that bureaucrats focus on technical or administrative ways to achieve ends which are 'presumptively shared' by society as a whole, while politicians are more likely to take sides between conflicting interests.[17] He adds that bureaucrats are less likely than politicians to agree that citizen participation in government is a good thing.[18] His view of the differences in the way in which bureaucrats and politicians perceive policy issues can be summarized in his statement that "Politicians live in a world of political pressures to be reconciled, while civil servants live in a world of practical problems to be solved."[19]

The Friedrich-Finer and Putnam paradigms presented above coincide with some points of Gruber's analysis. Friedrich's position is to be found not in her own ideas about democratic control of government but rather in the replies of many of her respondents, who saw themselves as guardians of the public interest against the particularistic designs of politicians or the special interests of citizens"[20] In that sense, Gruber's bureaucrats espoused Dahl's 'guardianship' notion, whether they realized it or not. Finer's arguments about the 'mastership' of the public finds a resonant echo in Gruber's declaration that a truly democratic political system involves control of the government by the governed[21] and that genuine democratic control lies in its imposition by either the citizens or their elected representatives.[22] Putnam's argument that bureaucrats and politicians approach governance from different perspectives corresponds to some extent with Gruber's notion that bureaucrats view their role in government in terms of "administrative matters, technical services,"[23] and program delivery, and not as participants in the "political process."[24]

I turn now to the views of a number of Canadian writers regarding the control of public bureaucracies. In a Canadian context, the concept of ministerial responsibility forms the backdrop for much of the writing about controlling public bureaucracies. Kernaghan and Siegel note that under this notion a minister is responsible to Parliament for all that goes on in his or her department and must resign in the event of a serious error, including things done by departmental officers without the knowledge or consent of the minister. In addition, he or she must explain and defend the actions of his or her subordinates before that body.[25] Sutherland, however, asserts that no Canadian Minister has ever been forced to resign for errors by officials[26] and adds that there is evidence (based on her examination of the so-called Al-Mashat Affair) that current federal government ministers often fail to defend their bureaucratic subordinates.[27]

According to Sutherland,[28] the principle of ministerial responsibility is intended to ensure that someone accountable to the citizens through Parliament must answer for the misdeeds of government agencies. In practice, the matter is more complex. As Campbell and Szablowski note, this principle assumes that a minister is accountable to Parliament, while officials are "accountable internally according to lines and standards applicable in their department."[29] They add that these internal standards are weak instruments at best, since a superior cannot dismiss or demote an individual without involving himself or herself in a lengthy and disagreeable adjudication process.[30] My own experience in the federal public service suggests that it can take up to seven years to dismiss an employee who refuses to leave voluntarily and who resorts to every avenue of appeal. To parody Thomas Hobbes,[31] the process is nasty, brutish, and very, very long. Consequently, it is seldom used. Campbell and Szablowski do indicate, however, that other kinds of less direct penalties, and particularly peer pressure, can often bring recalcitrant individuals to heel.[32] The foregoing deals with the issue of one individual's refusal to act according to internal instructions which have their origins in political direction. It does not, however, address the more serious case of whole departments which refuse legitimate political direction or evade it in some way. But both illustrate the weakening of political control over public bureaucracies.

Part of the debate in Canada about controlling bureaucracies centres around the extent of the power and influence actually exercised by the public service. In other words, are the public bureaucracies in Canada as powerful and influential as they are sometimes made out to be? Mitchell Sharp, who has been both a deputy minister and a cabinet minister at the federal level, says that Canada's top public servants may wield as much influence in policy development as ministers.[33] In addition, Kernaghan asserts that public servants exercise significant power in both policy formulation and policy execution.[34] He adds that in many instances public servants are either permitted or required to exercise considerable judgment and discretion in the administration of public policy. He further asserts that this is particularly true in cases where the making or enforcement of regulations has been either delegated directly to administrators by Parliament or is sub-delegated by the Cabinet or by an individual minister.

In addition, Gordon Osbaldeston, a former deputy minister and Clerk of the Privy Council, informs us that federal deputy ministers are given certain financial authorities directly (that is, not through a minister) under the provisions of the Financial Administration Act,[35] and that under the Interpretation Act a deputy minister can undertake many of the functions of a minister.[36] This kind of delegation of authority is not inconsiderable in its potential impact upon the citizen. Nor is it necessarily confined to deputy ministers. For example, the Minister of the former Employment and Immigration Commission routinely delegated to field office managers his or her authority to issue an order to convene an immigration enquiry, authorize an arrest warrant in the case of an immigration enquiry or deportation order, or to approve a Minister's Permit to allow an individual to remain in Canada for periods of up to a year.[37]

Dwivedi has noted that with the emergence of the administrative state public servants have been called on to act not only as administrators but as reformers, policy formulators, and regulators of the economy, amongst others, and that this has accorded them a great deal of power.[38] In a similar vein, Kernaghan and McLeod suggest that there will continue to be more rather than less governmental intervention in the lives of individual citizens, as well as more rather than less administrative (as opposed to political) influence in the operation of government.[39]

Plasse, speaking from a later vantage point, asserts that although the idea of a separation between politics and administration and of the subordination of administration to politics is widely held, what goes on in practice largely contradicts the idea.[40] She adds that senior bureaucrats participate more actively in the policy process than is provided for in the theory of bureaucratic neutrality. She argues that in the future new theories which reflect the harmonization of interests, the sharing of power, and the complementarity of effort between administrators and politicians will have to be developed if reality is to square with theory.[41] Moreover, Bennett and MacPhail inform us that many Ottawa senior public servants see both themselves and their ministers as the key agents in the policy development process, particularly at the agenda-setting stage.[42]

I turn now to an account of the measures taken by two Prime Ministers to ensure political control of the federal government bureaucracy. Aucoin defines two approaches involved in these initiatives, which he calls 'rational management' and 'brokerage politics.' The first he applies to the administration of Pierre Trudeau; the second, to Brian Mulroney's government.[43] He says that Trudeau believed that the influence of the bureaucracy and the vested interests of federal departments and agencies had to be countered so that they did not override political policy innovation or coherence.[44] In order to do this, Trudeau first set up a ministerial committee system designed not only to allow ministers more input into the policy process but also to ensure that the collective influence of these committees would better control both individual ministers and bureaucrats.[45]

The establishment of the ministerial committees perhaps dictated Trudeau's second move, which was to strengthen and enhance the role of the central agencies of government. This was to enable them to provide both the Prime Minister and the Cabinet with independent analyses of departmental proposals, so that such submissions were both consistent and co-ordinated with the government's overall objectives.[46] Paradoxically, this greater reliance on central agencies required rather rigid formal processes, which in turn resulted in central agency officials being more easily able to frustrate the wishes of individual ministers than had been theretofore the case.[47] One is here reminded of Burns' lines:

> The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
> Gang aft agley,

An' lea'e us nought but grief and pain,
For promised joy![48]

Aucoin suggests that Trudeau's control initiatives reflected his belief in, and reliance on, rationalist principles.[49] Mulroney, on the other hand, was interested in the accommodation of interests, and this led him to establish measures to solicit outside input into the policy development process, instead of relying heavily on the bureaucracy, as Trudeau had done.[50] Mulroney first centralized Order-in-Council appointments in the Prime Minister's Office, so that due consideration was given to the ideologies and personal loyalties of those being considered for such appointments.[51] Second, he attempted to strengthen the political element in the governance equation by establishing the position of Chief of Staff to assist ministers in the discharge of their duties, and gave it sufficient rank and prestige to ensure that these officials could deal as equals with deputy ministers. However, like Trudeau before him, Mulroney's initiatives have, as Campbell has noted "failed to redirect an unsympathetic bureaucracy."[52]

Politicising the bureaucracy, that is, appointing partisan political individuals to positions of power and responsibility in the bureaucracy has also been advocated as one means by which politicians may assert control over their bureaucracies. Stéphane Dion notes that this is based on the belief that politicization will improve political control over bureaucracies by: (1) enhancing the unity of purpose of the political decision makers and their administrative advisors; (2) dissolving the bureaucracy's administrative and statutory rigidities not only in the formulation of policy but also in its implementation; (3) allowing for individuals sympathetic to the governing party to acquire the requisite administrative skills over time so as to better support that party's interests and political initiatives; (4) permitting the shakeup of bureaucracies hiding behind legislation and long standing administrative practices; and (5) ensuring that political initiatives will be actively supported by the bureaucracies in dealings with the public.[53] Dion adds, though, that politicization by itself does not guarantee political control over the bureaucracy, since individuals so selected may use the powers and authority thus granted them for their own ends, including that of gaining autonomy from elected officials. In addition, such appointees may be unable to break the resistance of the regular bureaucracy, who resent their intrusion. And finally, such political appointees may be co-opted by the very bureaucracies they are appointed to control and end up as defenders of those institutions.[54]

Has the Canadian government politicised its civil service? In examining the effect on federal government deputy ministers of a change in political administration in the period from 1867 to 1987, Bourgault and Dion found that changes in political parties forming the government had little effect on the tenure of federal government deputy ministers.[55] Their evidence suggests that in roughly two thirds of the cases an incoming political administration simply moved existing deputy ministers to posts of equivalent rank rather than terminating their employment, if they chose not to leave them in place.[56] In the balance of cases, deputies were transferred to crown agencies, diplomatic posts, or special advisory posts in central agencies.[57]

In another study, Bourgault and Dion examined the record of the first Mulroney administration to determine what changes in deputy ministers were made.[58] They conclude that Mulroney did not politicize the position of deputy minister, although, like his predecessors, he transferred many of them to other postings.[59] They suggest that part of the reason for this is that, even though Mulroney himself had threatened to root out unavowed Liberals in the public service during the 1984 election campaign,[60] the Clerk of the Privy Council, who normally advises the Prime Minister on the appointment of deputy ministers, succeeded in retaining his influence over this process in the majority of cases.[61] The evidence put forward by Bourgault and Dion with respect to the non-politicization of the federal public service does not hold in all jurisdictions. For instance, Robert Normand tells us that following his electoral victory Premier Devine sacked most of Saskatchewan's senior civil servants.[62] A more detailed account of the Devine government's motives and modus operandi in this instance is provided by Michelmann and Steeves.[63]

On the other hand, it is possible that a politicization of the federal public service may be taking place at a different level and in a way that reduces rather than increases political control over it. Based on the evidence provided by Bourgault and Dion, the senior federal bureaucracy may well remain neutral and non-partisan. However, a kind of bottom-up politicization of the federal public service, promoted and supported by public service unions, may threaten both its political neutrality and its acceptance of political direction. The mandarins and their political masters may still cling to the principle of the political neutrality of the public service in Canada, but the front-line staff may have abandoned it in favour of more direct political action because they believe that their interests as public servants are threatened by their political masters. I shall return to this topic later in this chapter.

The foregoing suggests that bureaucracies do indeed play a significant and, as Campbell's evidence suggests,[64] sometimes a commanding role in the formulation of public policy in Canada. The question then becomes: Should bureaucracies have that much power and influence? There are some in Canada who argue that they indeed should. That conviction, with variations in detail, has been articulated by Baker[65] and Ostry.[66] Baker, for instance, asserts that the public service should be given the power necessary to "influence Canadian society in positive directions,...."[67] In a like vein, Ostry talks about the need for an independent public service[68] and argues that bureaucracies are useful as informed counterpoises to popular demands.[69] He adds that deputy ministers are responsible (and have duties to) not only to their minister but also to Parliament, the law, and the country as a whole.[70]

On the other hand, Mallory notes that with the emergence of a complex and rapidly changing technology and its attendant economic, social, and political changes it is inevitable that governments depend more and more upon experts to make public policy decisions.[71] He indicates that legislatures have generally failed to specify well enough the terms under which the state and its agencies are permitted to intervene in the affairs of the citizen[72] and adds that parliamentary delegation to administrative agencies of the power to make rules has sometimes been frighteningly extensive.[73] He charges that this has resulted in the application of policies not covered by any statute and which Parliament has never approved.[74] As a remedy, he calls for a continuous oversight process in order to ensure that there is effective public control over both "...the means as well as the ends of the policy process."[75]

C. Cases and Examples

Are there instances where bureaucracies exert what Weber called 'overtowering'[76] influence on public policy vis-à-vis politicians? Do bureaucracies in fact resist control in the manner suggested by Gruber? There is evidence to support both views. For instance, Tucker and Ziegler concluded after an exhaustive study of school board administration in Oregon that school superintendents "either directly or indirectly control their school boards' agendas: only 4 percent of the boards surveyed exercised independent agenda-setting authority."[77] Data on the receptivity of municipal administrators to direction from elected officials suggests that these administrators do in fact exercise a large measure of control over what Greene calls "service delivery decisions" and are not much influenced by the views of either politicians or citizens.[78]

A striking example of successful bureaucratic insubordination on a large scale is provided by Wood,[79] who describes how the United States Environmental Protection Agency bureaucrats evaded a number of Reagan administration attempts to change the agency's practices during the early 1980's. Wood notes that despite the initial appointment of senior officials inimical to environmentalist concerns in general and antagonistic to the agency's mission in particular, and in the face of reorganizations designed to thwart the carrying on of its mandate,[80] the EPA "bucked the administration and used its slack resources to substantially increase surveillance of pollution sources"[81] the very thing that the Reagan White House was attempting to reduce. He also notes that the EPA was only brought to heel when President Reagan persuaded Congress to cut the agency's budget but that all of the appointments, reorganizations, and personnel changes made by Reagan or his appointees to the agency had little appreciable effect on its conduct.[82] This example confirms not only Gruber's assertion that bureaucrats have their own interests as well as considerable resources to resist control which conflicts with those interests[83] but also Peters' argument that bureaucracies will resist political efforts to destroy or limit their organization.[84]

Even if one disagrees with Reagan's actions in this instance, the evidence indicates that the bureaucracy involved successfully resisted political direction. In this particular case, it may be argued that the defiance of political authority was beneficial in that it may have protected the environment from possible damage. But if one accepts the principle that public bureaucracies can legitimately resist political direction, what guarantees are there that in other cases the same kind of bureaucratic insubordination would be beneficial?

I turn now to an account of a number of Canadian examples of bureaucratic insubordination. One of the more widely referred-to cases (it did, after all, provoke a chiding from Mitchell Sharp)[85] is Flora MacDonald's account of her experiences as Minister of External Affairs in the Clark administration.[86] MacDonald asserts that in her case the resistance against her own initiatives in foreign policy came almost entirely from the senior mandarins in the External Affairs Department.[87] She accuses them of resisting ministerial attention to outside advice[88] and of creating their own "Civil service policy--...."[89] She also charges that senior civil servants 'entrap' ministers by failing to give them time to properly assess policy options, generating confusing reports and memoranda, and proposing one-dimensional options for ministerial consideration.[90]

Lloyd Axworthy is another former federal cabinet minister who has complained that the public service is unresponsive to policy initiatives which it perceives as not in its interests.[91] He asserts that as Minister of Transport he had to devise ways to break the civil service's monopoly on information and to generate enough public debate on transportation issues so as to create a public demand for the kind of change he wished to introduce, which was being resisted by the bureaucrats in the Transport department and by their allies, the major airlines.[92] Another of Axworthy's responses was to create a policy unit in his own office.

While MacDonald's views could be said to be coloured by the general mistrust of the federal bureaucracy which the Progressive Conservatives brought into government, the same cannot be said for the Liberal Lloyd Axworthy. In a much later expression of the same sentiment, Paul Dick, Minister of Supply and Services in the Mulroney administration, complained early in 1992 that bureaucratic resistance was jeopardizing his efforts to "open up" the federal government's tendering process. In fact, he went so far as to accuse senior bureaucrats in his department of plotting to "hijack and bury" his initiative if he were not vigilant in its defense."[93]

In addition, there is some evidence that the federal Department of Finance has been able to frustrate the policy initiatives of at least two prime ministers. Campbell notes that Finance officials resisted efforts by Prime Minister Trudeau to establish a guaranteed annual income program administered through the tax system, even though the Prime Minister considered it a priority and appointed Marc Lalonde, one of his most trusted and able cabinet ministers, to the Health and Welfare portfolio in order to see this accomplished.[94] Campbell also says that the same bureaucracy derailed the efforts of Prime Minister Joe Clark to establish a tax deductibility program for home owners, even though Mr. Clark himself intervened personally to have it implemented.[95] This resistance was accomplished through the preparation of an endless series of briefs pointing out the obstacles to this political initiative, and by crafting budget measures which nullified any gains home owners would have made under this initiative. As Campbell puts it "Finance proved itself most immune to political initiatives that deviated sharply from its economic viewpoints."[96]

Public servants in every order of government in Canada now have what may be called true unions, with collective bargaining rights over most working conditions enshrined in law. This means that most public servants now have rights protected by law with respect to most employment conditions, guarded by organizations with both the legal right and the inclination to challenge governments when they believe that the interests of their memberships are threatened. This has altered the nature of the relationships between bureaucrats and politicians in ways which may not be readily apparent. This also means that deputy ministers and other senior mandarins can no longer exercise unbridled discretion in controlling their departmental staff. The net effect here is to dissolve one of the most important ingredients in the application of any control: the imposition of sanctions.

How have these new rules worked in practice? Certainly public service unions have not been reluctant to challenge elected leaders. Consider the case of the unionized public servants who process unemployment insurance claims. Those who disagreed with the Mulroney administration's decision to make it more difficult for individuals to qualify for unemployment insurance benefits, prepared a booklet designed to help people evade the new regulations.[97] A union official stated that this was a way for these public servants to dissociate themselves from government legislation.[98] In a public demonstration organized by the union in Edmonton some time later, a union spokesman said, "We like to remind the unemployed that we are not the makers of the law. That we are here to implement it. We do not believe in a lot of the policies."[99] The foregoing examples indicates that the federal government has to some extent lost control of its bureaucracy. As Thompson and Swimmer have noted in a different context, "Decisions once taken solely by managers or legislative bodies are now subject to the negotiating process and to public scrutiny of the collective bargaining process."[100]

The above-mentioned examples suggest that the existence of a neutral public service prepared to serve political masters of whatever partisan persuasion is possibly a fiction, at least for some of the more militant federal public servants. For example, Daryl Bean, President of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, vowed publicly to get even with the ruling Progressive Conservative Party in retaliation for federal government cutbacks in public service employment, and for ending a country-wide strike by federal public servants with back-to-work legislation.[101]

These examples feature the federal government's dilemma. But the problem is not limited to that level of government. For instance, police officers in the metropolitan Toronto area publicly challenged the Ontario government by wearing blue ribbons and baseball caps instead of their regulation uniforms and refusing to enforce parking violations, then staged a noisy protest in Queen's Park when those actions failed to get the Ontario government to rescind a number of regulations the police objected to.[102]

There is, however, another view. For instance, Panitch and Swartz argue that both federal and provincial governments in Canada have increasingly resorted to what they term "ad hoc" back-to work legislation to restrict the bargaining power of unions, often overriding their own labour legislation in the process.[103] They note that in the period from 1950 to 1978 the federal government resorted to such measures fourteen times and a number of provincial governments thirty-three times.[104] In addition, they note that both orders of government designated certain job classifications as essential services and thus not able to strike to enforce their demands.[105] In addition, Thompson and Swimmer note that "public reaction to strikes by public sector employees...[has been] almost uniformly negative.[106]

Besides the foregoing, politicians sometimes adopt more direct measures to control the behaviour of public servants. For instance, the Alberta Union of Public Service Employees has recently charged the Alberta Social Services Minister Mike Cardinal has resorted to disciplinary action to silence departmental employees who disagree with the government's policies.[107] Moreover, Mr. Cardinal is reported to have said that he "will not tolerate employees of the department criticizing their employer.[108] This illustrates the power of the political element in the equation of governance. And it is no doubt true that the downsizing and privatization initiatives taken by governments with political ideologies as disparate as those of the Rae administration or the Klein government have reduced the influence of unions, and by extension, that of the individual public servants who comprise their membership. But it is equally true that, because they control the information upon which modern governments operate and since they oversee the implementation of all public policy, public servants retain an enormous influence over the process of governance in Canada.

The concepts put forward by Finer, Friedrich, Gruber, Niskanen, and Putnam and the examples I have provided suggest that governance in Canada (and elsewhere) is not a straightforward case of politicians making decisions, with bureaucrats simply executing those decisions. They tend to show instead that bureaucracies are centres of power in their own right. In addition, they show that the roles and functions of both bureaucrats and politicians are indissolubly linked in the process of governance. The politician acquires his or her legitimacy to rule through the electoral process and is legally the master. But it is a mastership that depends on the technical and administrative expertise of the bureaucrat, without which the machinery of government cannot function. As Gruber notes, "We need their (the bureaucrats') substantive experience and their undivided attention to conduct the business of government."[109]

1. Jameson W. Doig, "If I See a Murderous Fellow Sharpening a Knife Cleverly...:" The Wilsonian Dichotomy and the Public Authority Tradition," in Public Administration Review, Vol. 43, No. 4, July/August, 1983, pp. 292-94.

2. B. Guy Peters, Comparing Public Bureaucracies: Problems of Theory and Method, (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1988).

3. Carl J. Friedrich, "Public Policy and the Nature of Administrative Responsibility," in Bureaucratic Power in National Politics, 3rd ed., Ed. Francis E. Rourke (Boston: Little, Brown and Company Inc., 1978), p. 403.

4. Ibid.

5. Joseph A. Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, 3rd ed. (New York, Harper & Row, 1950). What Schumpeter said about bureaucratic autonomy was: "It is not enough that the bureaucracy should be efficient and competent to give advice. It must also be strong enough to guide and, if need be, to instruct the politicians who head ministries. In order to be able to do this, it must be in a position to evolve principles of its own and sufficiently independent to assert them. It must be a power in its own right." p. 293.

6. I have drawn here on Doig's assertion that Woodrow Wilson was influenced by contemporary French and German thinking about the role of bureaucracies. See Doig, p. 293. Suleiman's quotation from Napoleon suggests some connection. See Ezra N. Suleiman, Politics, Power, and Bureaucracy in France: The Administrative Elite, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 13. The passage can be translated roughly as follows: "I wish to establish a civilian system [of administration] in France. There are at present only two kinds of powers in the world, the military and the ecclesiastical. I especially want to set up a corporate body, because a corporation does not die. A corporation has no other ambition than to be useful and no other interest that the public interest. This corps [of public officials] must have privileges; it must not be too dependent upon ministers nor the Emperor. I want a corps whose status is so equated with the nation that no one will lightly attempt to strike out against it."

7. Robert A. Dahl, Democracy and its Critics, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 52-53. For a full treatment of the notion of guardianship, see pp. 52-79.

8. Herman Finer, "Administrative Responsibility in Democratic Government," in Bureaucratic Power in National Politics, 3rd ed., Ed. Francis E. Rourke (Boston: Little, Brown and Company Inc., 1978), pp. 411-12.

9. Finer, p. 413.

10. Finer, p. 414.

11. Max Weber, From Max weber: Essays in Sociology, trans. & eds. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 90-95.

12. Robert D. Putnam, "Bureaucrats and Politicians: Contending Elites in the Policy Process," in Perspectives on Public Policy Making, eds. William B. Gwyn and George C. Edwards III, (New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1975), pp. 181-82.

13. Putnam, p. 181.

14. Ibid.

15. Putnam, p. 187.

16. Ibid.

17. Putnam, p. 191.

18. Putnam, p. 195.

19. Putnam, p. 202.

20. Gruber, pp. 113-117.

21. Gruber, p. 1.

22. Gruber, p. 12.

23. Gruber, p. 102.

24. Gruber, p. 101.

25. Kenneth Kernaghan and David Siegel, Public Administration in Canada: A Text. (Scarborough, Ont.: Nelson Canada, 1991), p. 379.

26. S.L. Sutherland, "Responsible Government and Ministerial Responsibility: Every Reform Is Its Own Problem," in Canadian Journal of Political Science, XXIV: 1 (March, 1991). pp.

91-120.

27. S.L. Sutherland, "The Al-Mashat Affair: administrative accountability in parliamentary institutions," in Canadian Public Administration, Vol. 34, No. 4, 1991, pp. 104-05.

28. Sharon L. Sutherland, "Responsible Government and Ministerial Responsibility: Every Reform Is Its Own Problem," pp. 96-97.

29. Colin Campbell and George J. Szablowski, The Superbureaucrats: Structure and Behaviour in Central Agencies, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1979), p.186.

30. Campbell and Szablowski, pp. 187-88.

31. The reference is to Thomas Hobbes' statement that in the state of nature "the life of man, [is] solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." in his Leviathan, ed. C.B. Macpherson, (London: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 186.

32. Ibid.

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45. Aucoin, pp. 288 and 289.

46. Aucoin, p. 289.

47. Aucoin, p. 290.

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63. Hans J. Michelmann and Jeffrey S. Steeves, "The 1982 transition in power in Saskatchewan: The Progressive Conservatives and the public service," in Canadian Public Administration, Vol. 28, No. 1, 1985, pp. 1-23.

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68. Ostry, p. 9.

69. Ibid.

70. Ostry, p. 8.

71. J.R. Mallory, "Curtailing 'Divine Right': The Control of Delegated Legislation in Canada," in The Administrative State in Canada, ed. O.P. Dwivedi, (Toronto: University of Toronto

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73. Mallory, pp. 133-34.

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81. Wood, p. 224.

82. Wood, p. 228.

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84. B. Guy Peters, "Politicians and bureaucrats in the politics of policy-making," in Bureaucracy and Public Choice, ed. Jan-Eric Lane, (London: Sage Publications, 1987), pp. 263-64.

85. Mitchell Sharp, p. 43.

86. Flora MacDonald, "The Minister and the Mandarins: How a New Minister Copes With the Entrapment Devices of Bureaucracy." in Policy Options, Vol. 1, 1980, pp. 29-31.

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88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.

90. MacDonald, pp. 30-31.

91. Lloyd Axworthy, "Control of Policy," in Policy Options, April, 1985, pp. 17-20.

92. Axworthy, pp. 17 and 18.

93. Duncan Thorne, "Open tendering faces 'hijack' by mandarins," Edmonton Journal, February 27, 1992.

94. Colin Campbell, Governments Under Stress: Political executives and key bureaucrats in Washington, London, and Ottawa, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), p. 152.

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98. Ibid.

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101. Jan Lounder, "Union targeting PM: PSAC fuming over federal cutbacks," in The Edmonton Sun, September 10, 1992.

102. Rod Frey, "Canada's fed-up, furious police," in Alberta Report, November 16, 1992, pp. 34-38.

103. Leo V. Panitch and Don Swartz, "From Free Collective Bargaining to Permanent Exceptionalism: The Economic Crisis and the Transformation of Industrial Relations in Canada," in Conflict or compromise: The Future of Public Sector Industrial

Relations, eds. Mark Thompson and Gene Swimmer, (Montreal: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1984), pp. 421-24.

104. Panitch and Swartz, See Table 12-2, p. 423.

105. Ibid.

106. Mark Thompson and Gene Swimmer, "The Future of Public Sector Industrial Relations," in Conflict or Compromise: The Future of Public Sector Industrial Relations, eds. Mark Thompson and Gene Swimmer, (Montreal: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1984), p.444.

107. Conal Mullen, "Gov't silencing workers, union charges," in Edmonton Journal, December 9, 1993.

108. Ibid.

109. Gruber, p. 203.

CHAPTER THREE

Democratic Control and Bureaucratic Power: Gruber's Analysis

A. Introduction

In Chapter Two I examined the issue of democratic control of bureaucracies from a conceptual perspective and supplemented those insights with examples of bureaucratic evasion of effective political control drawn from both Canadian and American experience. What emerges from that review is that in some instances bureaucracies can, and do, evade political direction when they believe it is in their interests to do so or when they consider that the political direction they receive would result in damage to society. In this chapter, I shall explore a number of specific factors which go into the effective imposition of democratic control over public bureaucracies. I have chosen Gruber's[1] account of the elements making up the control process and of the problems entailed because it focuses directly on the concrete realities of the control interactions between bureaucrats on one side and politicians and citizens on the other.

B. Gruber's Account

Gruber begins with the premise that a political decision is of itself not always enough to ensure a significant shift in administrative behaviour.[2] This necessitates the application of some sort of control or the setting of limits on bureaucratic behaviour by the political arm of government.[3] For Gruber, a key element in the control process is the subordination of the bureaucracy to citizens and politicians. As she puts it, "the heart of a democratic political system is control of the government by the governed."[4] For her, the bureaucracy is an integral part of government and the issue is to reconcile decision-making within bureaucracies with popular control of governments.[5] She therefore argues that "What transforms constraint into democratic control is its imposition by a democratic political actor--either the citizens or their elected representatives."[6] A key element in Gruber's position is that "Mere congruence of bureaucratic action with citizen wants does not constitute control."[7]

Gruber categorizes control or limits on bureaucratic behaviour as being of two kinds: procedural and substantive. Procedural control involves controlling how bureaucrats do things; substantive control consists of constraints on the substance of decisions bureaucrats are permitted to make.[8] In a Canadian government context, procedural kinds of control are to be found in the legislation and regulations which govern the administration of the Unemployment Insurance Act and the Immigration Act, both of which set rigid limits on the manner in which departmental officials may decide how benefits or services are made available to individuals and, importantly, which individuals are eligible for them.[9] A key element in Gruber's perspective lies in her assertion that the choice between procedural and substantive control involves more than questions of efficiency and is linked directly to the way one views the role of government. For example, if one sees government's chief role as that of protecting the liberties of individuals, the concern is the abuse of power. In that case, procedural controls are more appropriate. On the other hand, if one believes that the role of government is to achieve societal ends, the objective is to ensure the proper use of power. Here substantive controls are the best choice.[10]

Gruber also notes that part of the reason for control being at issue lies in the fact that politicians depend upon the administrative and professional skills of bureaucrats.[11] Indeed, it is primarily because bureaucrats make the day-to-day program decisions that give effect to political decisions, have the best information on how things really work and, most important, possess the administrative expertise necessary to ensure that programs and services are delivered effectively, that citizens and politicians are so dependent upon them.[12] As Peters has noted, "The bureaucracy...controls much of the government's procedural machinery and can structure or accelerate or delay decisions through their mastery of procedures."[13] On the same point, Suleiman notes that the power of the civil service lies not so much in its power to initiate policies but in its ability to frustrate the initiatives of others.[14] This mastery of procedures confers a great deal of power and influence upon bureaucracies as institutions.

Gruber also asserts that bureaucrats do not generally welcome attempts at control and typically resist them.[15] She adds that, because of their technical and administrative expertise, bureaucrats have power to resist control when political direction conflicts with their interests or their notions of what is the preferred course of action.[16] She advances a number of reasons for this capacity. One is that bureaucrats see themselves as the administrative experts of government.[17] Given the scale of modern government and the technical complexities of current policy issues, this is often not an unwarranted position. Another is that bureaucrats do not always believe that the public is capable of governing itself effectively, in the sense that individual citizens may not be able to discern the public interest, particularly with respect to highly technical matters or complex issues. For some bureaucrats, this tends to confirm their view that some controls are unwarranted.[18] That view, of course, runs counter to the democratic ideal that people are quite capable of determining their own interests and of governing themselves. It is also contrary to the Aristotelian dictum that the wisdom of the many is superior to that of the "excellent man"[19] who is, in the context of this argument, the expert bureaucrat.

The reluctance of bureaucracies to accept political or social control leads Gruber to examine the costs of such control. She identifies two kinds of costs: effectiveness costs and enforcement costs.[20] Effectiveness costs arise when the controllers (politicians usually, but sometimes the public as well) instruct bureaucrats to behave in ways which cannot achieve the desired policy results,[21] or when constraints are such that bureaucrats cannot do what is asked of them.[22] An example of the latter would be the refusal of the politicians to provide the necessary resources to implement policy initiatives that they have otherwise approved. Enforcement costs, on the other hand, are created when the controllers are compelled to enforce compliance resulting from bureaucratic insubordination or neglect.[23] In Canada, the Office of the federal Auditor General is an example of an enforcement measure. In some respects, so are the various ombudsmen or rights tribunals established by the federal and some provincial governments.

Gruber goes on to indicate that the technical complexities of the administrative or social problems to be dealt with give bureaucrats an edge in their dealings with politicians or citizens over issues of control, since the non-expert politician or citizen may not know exactly what it is that needs to be done in order to achieve desired public goals.[24] She adds that it is generally much easier to ensure procedural conformity than it is to foresee results.[25] That is, the imposition of procedural controls are easier to measure and evaluate than is the effectiveness of substantive controls, which are more subject to the vagaries of external circumstances, and which are often beyond the capacity of both bureaucrats or politicians to either predict or deal with. In addition, she stresses that the costs of control may be aggravated by the complexity of modern society, which generates conditions under which there may be conflicting goals. That, in turn, may be used by bureaucrats as excuses for non-compliance with political direction or the wishes of citizens.[26]

In dealing with the issue of the perceptions of bureaucrats to democratic control, Gruber asserts that bureaucrats resist control "because they enjoy autonomy, because their lives are easier if they are their own masters, and because they feel they know best."[27] As will become clear in the following chapter, the latter may be an extremely important element of the bureaucrat's perspective on control. She also indicates that bureaucrats do not reject the concepts of democracy, including that of democratic control, but seek instead to isolate themselves from the political process.[28] One of the key conclusions she draws from her study regarding the reluctance of bureaucrats to accept political control is the fact that bureaucrats generally see themselves as "people on the job."[29] and not as part of a democratic political process.

She also notes that the bureaucrats she spoke with "seemed blissfully unaware that their desire for autonomy might conflict with democratic values."[30] and says that while these individuals may have agreed in principle with the notion of democratic control, they saw such restrictions as applying to others and not to themselves.[31] She attributes this, in part at least, to the fact that bureaucrats are concerned almost exclusively with the concrete realities of problems associated with the job rather than with abstract beliefs in democracy.[32] In addition, she notes that the support for the basic tenets of democracy articulated by the bureaucrats she interviewed did not translate into a concrete appreciation of how these tenets could be implemented into the actual workings of the agencies they inhabited[33] and that they "almost universally failed to connect their work with the operation of a democracy."[34] As she observes, "civil servants live in a world of practical problems to be solved,"[35] a world filled with "administrative matters, technical services, [and] substantive programs...not with political issues or the search to implement democratic norms."[36] This view of themselves as 'people on the job' leads some bureaucrats, she says, to conclude that: "If what one does is not political, then politicians have no right intervening."[37] My own experience as a public servant suggests that the 'people on the job' perspective is shared by many public servants in Canada (at all levels of government) but that the 'politicians have no right to intervene' view is much less prevalent.

A perhaps more contentious argument made by some bureaucrats in Gruber's study is that they must act as the guardians of the public good, on the basis that politicians are incapable of discerning the public interest.[38] This is a variation on the theme put forward by Baker and Ostry which I referred to in Chapter Two.[39] Indeed, Gruber notes that sometimes bureaucrats argue that politicians are, in fact, "incapable of discerning the public interest"[40] and adds that "By rejecting elected officials as pursuers of the public interest, such bureaucrats are able to justify their rejection of interference by such officials and still be consistent in their belief in democracy."[41]

Gruber also asserts that at least some bureaucrats not only consider politicians unable to define the true public good but also believe that this applies to the citizen as well. Again, this leads to the conviction that they (the bureaucrats) "must safeguard the public interest not only against the demands of politicians but also against parts of the public itself because of flaws in the public's ability to discern what is best."[42]

Gruber believes that bureaucracies possess what she refers to as the three critical resources in the process of governance,[43] that is: (1) the responsibility for making day-to-day program decisions; (2) the most comprehensive knowledge of the workings of the agency or department involved; and (3) substantive and administrative expertise. In other words, these are the sources of their power.

For Gruber, what bureaucrats do, how they do it, and the context in which they do it all have an important bearing on how democratic control can be most effectively implemented. Gruber uses the concept of policy areas to help distinguish the contexts in which bureaucracies operate and identifies two which are important in terms of the implementation of democratic control: technology, and environment.[44] By technology she means the measures used by an organization to achieve its ends[45] or, in other words, the ways or means used by bureaucracies to do things. Environment, on the other hand, refers to the forces external to an organization that affect its capacity to act in some way.[46] Gruber notes, for instance, that where the technology employed by a bureaucracy is simple and easy for nonspecialists to understand, politicians and citizens are more likely to be able to limit bureaucratic behaviour.[47] Gruber uses the example of the repair of potholes as a case where the technology is easy to understand and judge, and the intractability of problems associated with the high unemployment amongst ghetto youth as one where no one (including the expert bureaucrats) really has a firm grip on what needs to be done.[48] She adds that where the environment features things like conflicting societal goals, unstable social or political surroundings, complex policy issues, and agency autonomy, a weakening of political and citizen control over bureaucracies is virtually inevitable.[49]

Another key element in Gruber's depiction of a bureaucrat's response to outside control of his or her activities is what she calls the bureaucrat's 'core identity.' That is, the way that he or she thinks of himself or herself at work.[50] She notes that this core identity "defines the sources of satisfaction a bureaucrat derives from his or her job and the central contribution the bureaucrat sees him or herself making to it."[51] She identifies three such core identities: (1) the expert, (2) the worker, and (3) the administrator.[52] Gruber also notes that the technologies in use in an agency tend to create different demands on the job, attract different kinds of people, and reinforce the importance of certain skills, or types of skills.[53]

Gruber asserts that those she defines as 'the expert' derive their satisfaction from the substance of their work and from their ability to use their expertise to deal with substantive issues.[54] She also asserts that experts tend to resist control by others who do not understand their specialized technology.[55] She adds that where bureaucrats perceive themselves as having specialized expertise which covers a wide range of issues, they are likely to resist control on many fronts.[56] For what Gruber identifies as the 'worker' core identity, the primary concern is working conditions and daily job routines.[57] And it is threats to these conditions that are apt to provoke the greatest resistance to control.[58] For the 'administrator' core identity category, the key issue is the flexibility to respond effectively to changing circumstances in order to ensure the proper administration of their programs.[59] Again, controls which threaten such flexibility are much more likely to be resisted than are other kinds of control.[60]

However, despite their resistance to controls which threaten their core identities, bureaucrats are generally ready to tolerate those which do not.[61] Gruber indicates that bureaucrats will accept control which they see as either legitimate or useful[62] and that they tolerate control as legitimate where the politician is seen as being competent (by the bureaucrat's standards) in any policy area.[63] This may also apply in some cases to the various clienteles with which the bureaucracies deal.[64]

In addition, bureaucrats may be prepared to accept outside control when either politicians or citizens control a good which the bureaucrats value. In other words, if it is useful to do so from the bureaucrat's perspective. For instance, Gruber notes that in the case she investigated, school administrators were prepared to accept a modicum of political control from the city administration in return for the financial support provided by that administration.[65] With respect to the case of citizen control, she adds that: "citizen information serves the same function as the mayor's money: it helps the bureaucrats do a good job."[66] Under those circumstances, bureaucrats are prepared to accept a weak form of control in order to secure that good.[67] Lastly, she indicates that a particular agency may accept some form of control in order to obtain the cooperation of one or more other agencies whose assistance is vital to its achieving its own goals.[68]

For Gruber, if democratic controls are to be effective, politicians or citizens must decide what social values they wish to pursue, how they exercise control, and what costs they will tolerate in the context of whether procedural or substantive kinds of control will be imposed, the extent to which bureaucrats are constrained, the kinds of policies and policy areas involved, the technologies required and the social and institutional environments in which governments operate.

What Gruber proposes to enhance political and citizen control over bureaucracies is a transaction process under which bureaucrats accept a degree of control in return for something they value, such as resources or information. As she says, "control results not from political actors telling bureaucrats what to do but from constructing conditions in which bureaucratic behaviour is constrained in exchange for resources that bureaucrats seek."[69] This is a process she labels as exchange. She contends, though, that her exchange model still involves the exercise of formal authority by political actors and that politicians do have the power to deny funding to recalcitrant administrators and that citizens may sue when bureaucrats abuse their power.[70] But she adds that such power is to be used in a reciprocal relationship between politicians and citizens on one side and bureaucrats on the other,[71] rather than in a uni-directional way, where politicians dictate and bureaucrats obey.

C. Assessments

Because it takes into full account the practical administrative problems involved, Gruber's suggestion that bureaucracies can best be democratically constrained through a process of exchange is an important contribution to the dialogue about democratic control of bureaucracies. For instance, it recognizes bureaucracies' contribution to the process of governance and their real importance in that process. It also reminds us that bureaucracies are, in many respects, institutions motivated by a keen sense of self-preservation and that their monopoly of certain types of expertise accords them significant power. In this respect, it also undermines the view that politicians (and by extension the citizens) are the only governors and that bureaucrats are no more than neutral automatons whose sole responsibility is to unthinkingly carry out the dictates of their political masters. This is a salutary reminder of the complexity of governance in a modern state.

On the other hand, her approach may not be applicable under all circumstances. For instance, her notion of exchange as a control strategy (which is essentially a bargaining approach) seems to rest on the assumption that both politicians and bureaucrats always have something they are prepared to exchange in such a bargain. In an expanding economy politicians have the luxury of 'buying off,' as it were, their bureaucrats with ever greater benefits in return for a docile acceptance of government policies. It should be noted here that such benefits need not always be in the form of direct wages and perquisites but may also involve the creation of new programs or the expansion of existing ones, thereby providing additional opportunities for professional administrators. This propensity is not, however, limited to politicians. As Morgan has noted, "one should not underestimate society's unconscious need to keep most of its members occupied in one way or another."[72] Morgan's point here is that the federal public service was called upon to absorb part of the country's surplus labour force, beginning with war veterans after 1945 and ending with the baby bloomers in the early 1960's. In this instance, politicians merely reflected what most individual Canadians wanted at the time. Nonetheless, the federal bureaucracy, as an institution, was the beneficiary, as were the individuals fortunate enough to become federal public servants.

But in an era of scarcity, politicians find themselves unable to offer their bureaucracies the level of rewards that would ensure the continued fealty of the latter. Worse still, when ideology or public pressure moves politicians to reduce the benefits accorded their bureaucracies or (which is even worse from the bureaucrat's point of view) eliminate administrative units or even whole departments, it may generate the kind of bureaucratic backlash which Panitch and Swartz anticipated,[73] and which now plagues the Alberta government.[74] The foregoing examples dealt with decisions made by politicians, but the extremely negative reactions by Alberta public service unions to the Klein government's restructuring initiatives suggests that public sector workers also have limits on what they are prepared to put into the bargaining process. This suggests that under conditions of scarcity an exchange model carries with it inherent weaknesses.

1. Judith E. Gruber, Controlling Bureaucracies: Dilemmas in Democratic Governance, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

2. Gruber, p. 3.

3. Gruber, p. 11.

4. Gruber, p. 1.

5. Gruber, p. 3.

6. Gruber, p. 12.

7. Ibid.

8. Gruber, pp. 16-17.

9. In making this point I have drawn upon my twenty-four years of experience as an officer with the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission.

10. Gruber, p. 52.

11. Ibid.

12. Gruber, p. 202.

13. B. Guy Peters, "Politicians and bureaucrats in the politics of policy making," in Bureaucracy and Public Choice, ed. Jan-Eric Lane, (London: Sage Publications, 1987) p. 264.

14. Ezra N. Suleiman, Politics, Power, and Bureaucracy in France: The Administrative Elite, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 165-66.

15. Gruber, pp. 24-25.

16. Gruber, p. 24.

17. Gruber, pp. 38-39.

18. Gruber, pp. 40-44.

19. Aristotle, The Politics, ed. & trans. Carnes Lord. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 101.

20. Gruber, pp. 62-63.

21. Ibid.

22. Gruber, p. 63.

23. Gruber, pp. 63-64.

24. Gruber, pp. 68-69.

25. Gruber, p. 73.

26. Gruber, pp. 73-77.

27. Gruber, p. 87.

28. Gruber, p. 88.

29. Gruber, p. 92.

30. Gruber, p. 98.

31. Gruber, p. 88.

32. Gruber, p. 100.

33. Gruber, p. 98.

34. Gruber, p. 101.

35. Here Gruber is quoting Robert D. Putnam, "Bureaucrats and Politicians: Contending Elites in the Policy Process," in Perspectives on Public Policy Making, ed. William B. Gwyn and George C. Edwards III, Tulane Studies in Political Science, vol. 15, (New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1975), p. 202.

36. Gruber, p. 102.

37. Gruber, p. 103.

38. Gruber, p. 115.

39. See particularly p. 32 of that chapter.

40. Gruber, p. 115.

41. Gruber, p. 116.

42. Gruber. p. 117.

43. Gruber, p. 202.

44. Gruber, p. 123.

45. Gruber, p. 123.

46. Gruber, p. 124.

47. Gruber, p. 140.

48. Gruber, p. 138.

49. Gruber, pp. 142-47.

50. Gruber, p. 152.

51. Gruber, p. 163.

52. Gruber, p. 159.

53. Gruber, p. 153.

54. Gruber, p. 164.

55. Ibid.

56. Gruber, p. 166.

57. Gruber, pp. 167-68.

58. Ibid.

59. Gruber, p. 169.

60. Ibid.

61. Gruber, p. 170.

62. Gruber, p. 171.

63. Ibid.

64. Gruber, p. 175.

65. Gruber, p. 179.

66. Gruber, p. 182.

67. Ibid.

68. Gruber, p. 184.

69. Gruber, p. 211.

70. Ibid.

71. Gruber, p. 213.

72. Nicole Morgan, Implosion: An Analysis of the Growth of the Federal Public Service in Canada (1945-1985), (Montreal: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1986), p. xvi.

73. Leo V. Panitch and Donald Swartz, "From Free Collective Bargaining to Permanent Exceptionalism: The Economic Crisis and the Transformation of Industrial Relations in Canada," in Conflict or Compromise: The Future of Public Sector Industrial Relations, eds. Mark Thompson and Gene Swimmer, (Montreal: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1984), p. 429.

74. Linda Goyette, "Civil Servants challenge Klein government's approach to budget cuts," in Edmonton Journal, October 21, 1993, p. A-10; and "Premier Klein could benefit from a free-wheeling public debate," in Edmonton Journal, October, 27, 1993, p. A-14.

CHAPTER FOUR

Democratic Control and Bureaucratic Power: The Alberta Survey

A. Introduction

In previous chapters I have outlined the importance of ensuring democratic control of public bureaucracies, explored the issue from a conceptual perspective, provided specific examples of bureaucratic insubordination in both Canada and the United States, and examined in detail the concrete problems involved when politicians or citizens attempt to set limits on bureaucratic behaviour. In this chapter, I shall pursue the issue from the perspective of those most immediately affected with control measures, the bureaucrats themselves.

Here I shall present the results of my survey of the views of Canadian public servants on this issue. More specifically, I shall present their views on the subject under four general categories. The first deals with the respondents' perceptions about their jobs and includes: how well they believe politicians and the average citizen understand what they do on the job; the limits imposed on them on the job, by whom, and how (an example of control); whom they see themselves as serving; and how much influence they perceive themselves as having over policy development (a gauge of what they perceive as their role in government). The second explores their views about the role of politicians in the process of governance. The third surveys their beliefs about the role and function of the citizen with respect to the development and implementation of public policy. And the fourth seeks their views on the part that the concept of the public interest plays (or should play) in determining public policy. Throughout, I shall link the views of my respondents to issues raised by Gruber.

The first category comprises the responses to questions 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8 of the survey; (The full list of survey questions can be found in Appendix A to this essay); the second, to questions 5, 7, and 11; the third, to questions 9, 10, 12, and 13; and the fourth to questions 14 and 15. With the exception of the first, all questions in the survey were designed to examine the beliefs of the survey respondents with respect to the issues outlined in the four categories described in the preceding paragraph. They were devised to probe "ought to" issues, as opposed to "how to" matters. I should add that these questions were not intended to measure the strength or intensity of the belief behind the response but rather its existence. The only indication of the strength of a belief to be drawn from this survey is in the number of similar responses given to any question, and that addresses the pervasiveness of a belief, not its intensity in any given case.

The answers to Question One of the survey describe the task or function performed by the survey respondents. The replies to this question suggest that those surveyed cluster into three groups: (1) individuals holding positions with responsibility for policy issues only; (2) those with positions responsible for administrative and management functions as well as policy matters; and (3) those with positions primarily responsible for the delivery of programs and services directly to the public. The first group consists of individuals with positions whose functions, responsibilities, or tasks deal solely with policy analysis, development, or evaluation; with the preparation of background studies, forecasts, policy options, and draft legislation; or who manage units that specialize in providing such services. I shall call this group the "Policy-Makers." The second group comprises persons who manage units responsible for providing administrative services of one kind or another to other agency sections and who have significant input into policy development or evaluation, the preparation of which is the responsibility of others in the agency. This group I shall call the "Administrators." The third group consists of people whose positions entail responsibility for delivering a program or service directly to the agency's clientele and whose policy involvement is limited to input on the operational impact or administrative viability of policy proposals developed by others. This group I shall call the "Managers." Of the twenty-five participants, ten are Policy-Makers, nine are Administrators, and six are Managers.

The foregoing groupings are at best only distantly related to what Gruber has defined as bureaucrats' core identities.[1] This is a topic that I have elaborated on at some length in Chapter Three. Here it is sufficient to say that the individuals I have categorized as Policy-Makers, Administrators, and Managers all share some elements of both Gruber's expert and administrator categories (but none of her worker classification) in terms of their professional qualifications and administrative responsibilities. In terms of the kind of agency which employed them, the individuals who participated in my survey probably more closely resemble Gruber's administrators than anything else in that most work for agencies which provide a service directly to the public. In addition, like the teachers in Gruber's sample, the survey respondents exhibited a pronounced inclination to view themselves as the experts in their chosen fields.

I turn now to a consideration of the first category responses. This is to assess how the respondents see their work environment, and parallels, but does not duplicate, Gruber's notion of 'people on the job' which she classifies as one of the key elements of how her respondents viewed their participation in government.[2] As indicated earlier, this category covers the respondents' views on how well they believe politicians and the average citizen understand their particular role in government, the source and kinds of limits imposed on them on the job, their beliefs about whom it is that they serve, and their perception of the influence they have on public policy.

B. People on the Job

1. Understanding by Politicians

Part of the working environment of any senior bureaucrat requires a sometimes close relationship with his or her political masters, and an important part of the resulting interaction revolves around how well the politician respects their technical expertise and professional judgment on policy issues (Question 6). The survey respondents tend to believe that most politicians do not understand what it is that they do. Twenty-three of them articulated some variation of this response. The negative responses ranged from neutral observations such as, "Not many do," or "Generally very poorly," (understand what the bureaucrat does), to the more pointed statement that "They don't and they don't care to," to the even sharper assertion that "They don't have a 'rodent's behind' idea of what I do or what the public service does. More importantly, they really don't give a damn." On the other hand, it should be noted that thirteen of that number made a clear distinction between the 'average' politician and a minister or other political figure interested in, and involved with, the work of their agency. The former was classed as not knowing (and in a limited number of instances not interested in knowing) what the respondent does on the job, while the latter clearly understood what is involved.

2. Understanding by the Public

A second important aspect of the working environment of many bureaucrats is their relationship with the public (Question 8). The reply here is very similar to the respondents' perceptions of the lack of understanding by politicians of what it is they do on the job. Twenty-four of them indicated that the average individual had little or no understanding of what they do on the job. And again, like their beliefs about politicians, thirteen of them distinguished between the 'average' citizen and those citizens who deal with the agency or are interested in its affairs for some reason. Here too, the opinion varied to some extent. For instance, a fairly representative statement was "On the average, not well" (understand what the bureaucrat does). Another said "Not much, less so than the politicians." And one even exclaimed "My spouse doesn't understand what I do!" Clearly, the respondents believe that neither their political masters nor members of the public really understand what it is that they do. One senses an element of alienation here.

3. Control

With respect to the source and kinds of control exercised on them (Question 2.a), by far the most common source of control identified was the respondent's immediate supervisor. This response was given by twenty of the twenty-five respondents.

Moreover, it held in virtually the same proportion in all three groups, ranging from 77.8 to 83.3 per cent, with a median value of 80.0 per cent. This response is, incidentally, only marginally different than the 76.9 per cent of Gruber's respondents who identified their immediate supervisors as the individual or position to which they were accountable.[3] A second major source of control cited was the legislation governing the agency involved. Twelve respondents identified this item. A third source of perceived control was direct contact by a minister on an issue. Seven respondents cited this as a point of reference for themselves. I should add here that respondents identified more than one source of control as affecting them.

With respect to the means of control (Question 2.b), the most frequent response identified was resource allocations (either funding or staff, and frequently both) as a control mechanism, in the sense that the availability of resources dictates to a significant extent what can and cannot be accomplished, and how. Fourteen of the twenty-five respondents saw this as a control mechanism. Of almost equal importance in this respect were agency policies or administrative procedures. Twelve respondents identified this as an issue. Direction by a superior or a minister and legislation were identified eight and six times respectively as means of control.

There is, of course, some overlap in responses between the two parts of the question in that in some cases the source of control is also seen as the means. Legislation is an example of this; so is direction by a superior or minister. In addition, given the nature of the organizational setting in which the respondents work, it is not surprising that agency policies or administrative procedures should figure prominently as control mechanisms. That is their function. Nor is it surprising that a significant number of respondents saw resource allocation as a control function or as a limiting factor in their activities. To these respondents, resources are not an abstract entity, but rather a key element in getting things done and its inclusion is consistent with the idea of control on the job, since in many cases the supervisor does indeed control the subordinate's resource allocation. On the other hand, in today's uncertain political climate, this may reflect no more than public servants' concerns about current governments' preoccupation with expenditure controls and the resultant reduction in resources allocated to bureaucracies.

In addition to the foregoing, five of the respondents distinguished between what was termed by one individual 'what' and 'how' matters when questioned about the imposition of limits on their actions. In this context, 'what' matters involve choosing between alternatives or assigning priorities; 'how' matters relate to ways or means of accomplishing agreed-to ends. These respondents indicated that either the minister, a superior, or even legislation, were sources of limits or control with respect to 'what' issues, but that they had important discretion on 'how' issues.

4. Who do they Serve?

When asked who they believed they served on the job (Question 3), the survey respondents identified a wide array of individuals or groups, which, for the purposes of this essay, I have combined into four sets. These are: the public, the system, politicians, and other agencies. In virtually every instance, individual respondents identified elements of three or all of these groups as being who they served on the job. The grouping identified as the 'public' incorporates responses which include all, or any of, the particular agency's clientele, the citizen, or the public in aggregate. The 'system' designation includes responses which identified the agency itself or an immediate superior as the user of a service. 'Politicians' refers to ministers or to any other elected official. The 'other agencies' group includes references to both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Twenty-four respondents declared that they believed that they served the public in their job. Half of that twenty-four did, however, make a distinction between serving the public directly and indirectly. Of these twelve individuals, eight were Policy-Makers, the area where the respondents are less directly involved with the public. This lack of direct involvement with the public did not, however, diminish their commitment to the ideal of serving the public.

When it came to the issue of serving the system, there was less unanimity in the responses. Seventeen respondents cited this as a factor. In addition, some significant group differences emerged. For example, respondents in the Policy-Making and Administrative groups indicated that this was important with almost identical 80 and 77.8 per cent ratings, while Manager respondents rated it at only 33.3 per cent. With respect to the question of serving politicians, sixteen respondents suggested that this was important. And once again, there were group differences in the responses. For instance, 90 per cent of the Policy-Makers suggested that this was a worthwhile use of their time. On the other hand, only

44.4 per cent and 50.0 per cent of the Administrators and Managers respectively attached any importance to this.

5. Influence on Public Policy

With respect to the perceptions of the respondents on their influence on public policy (Question 4), eleven respondents indicated that they see themselves as having significant influence over the policies developed and implemented by their agencies. These respondents described this influence as 'enormous,' a 'great deal,' or 'substantial.' One person put it this way, "I have a substantive amount of influence over the development of policy...as well as in terms of its implementation." Another said, "Significant influence on policy in terms of how decisions are implemented." A third was even more specific in claiming that, "I believe I have enormous influence in this area. That influence is based on the information I hold and my ability to define the problems in detail, set agendas for policy discussions, and prepare options for consideration by both my immediate superiors and the minister." The latter individual (perhaps unwittingly) made the case for bureaucracies being so powerful as institutions. That is, they often control the agenda of the debate. Clearly these individuals see themselves as exerting a significant amount of influence over policy development. The reasons for this vary and range from their command of some kind of special skill or expertise to the fact that their positions allowed them to define the problems to be dealt with, formulate the questions to be addressed, set discussion agendas, or establish policy development processes.

A second large set of respondents (twelve) indicated that their influence over policy tended to be situational. That is, they perceived themselves as having little influence with respect to overall government policy, or in some cases the overarching polices of their agencies. They did, however, see themselves as having significant influence in areas of more limited application, such as the operations of an agency branch, or cases involving special circumstances. Only two of the respondents suggested that their influence on policy issues was limited.

The foregoing is in sharp contrast to Gruber's findings that three quarters of her respondents indicated that they did not make policy, even though they held positions which called for them to do so.[4] The replies in my survey suggest that the individuals involved believe that they enjoy a significant degree of influence in the development of public policy. This was, however, coupled with the acknowledgement that they functioned in bureaucratic settings, with its attendant limits on discretion, including ones imposed by politicians, the public, and the administrative systems under which they worked. In addition, the large majority of respondents who see service to the public as their major goal may suggest a willingness to be guided by the decisions of politicians and citizens. It may also be no more than a reflection of Gruber's assertion that bureaucrats do believe in the traditional concepts of democracy, even if they see themselves as outside the political process.[5]

In her study Gruber notes that the bureaucrats she interviewed believed that politicians and the public "should have very little power."[6] She says that most of them believed that political actors should do no more than react to proposals prepared by the agency.[7] She also notes that "For the overwhelming majority of the administrators, the ideal is a board that basically serves the department, not the reverse."[8] The respondents who participated in this survey gave no hint of the sense of alienation from the political system displayed in the Gruber study. Nor was there even the faintest indication that they shared the view of the housing administrator who told Gruber that "Practically, I would say that it's easier to do a good job if the local political control is not there."[9]

C. The Role of Politicians

In order to explore beliefs about the role of politicians in government, three questions were asked of those who participated in my survey. The first (Question 5) sought to bring out what the role of the politician should be; the second (Question 11) was designed to test the consistency of the first by establishing if the respondents believed that politicians actually discharged the roles they assigned them; and the third (Question 7) focused specifically on the kinds of decisions politicians should make with respect to the agency employing the respondent.

1. The Role of the Politician

When it came to assigning a role to politicians, the survey respondents displayed some ambivalence. The structure of the question permitted more than one answer and in nearly all cases that is what happened. Indeed, in some instances the responses were not necessarily consistent. For example, the primary role assigned to politicians by the respondents was to serve their constituents. This was expressed in a variety of ways by sixteen respondents. However, an almost equally large response (fifteen) suggested that politicians should direct the work of government or allocate budgets as between agencies or departments. On the other hand, there were thirteen responses which attributed no greater role to politicians than the setting of general goals or policies for government. In the latter respect at least, the survey respondents concurred with the views of those in Gruber's survey, who viewed policy making as "specifying the most general outcomes the agency is to achieve:...."[10] In addition, in a departure from the intention of the question, slightly more than a third of the respondents intimated that a key role for politicians was to keep informed and abreast of issues. On the other hand, there was no evidence of the pervasive view, expressed by Gruber's respondents, that politicians are not the elected leaders of the people, but rather party politicians.[11]

2. Do Politicians Deliver?

Did the survey respondents believe that politicians discharge the responsibilities they assigned them in terms of reflecting what is best for the public through their initiatives? Here again, the views expressed suggest a certain ambivalence. Just under half the respondents (eleven) indicated that what politicians do is indeed what is best in terms of public policy. A minority of this group (four) were categorical in declaring that politicians do what is best. The remainder indicated that even though politicians attempt to do what is in the best interests of the public, they are thwarted in these efforts by a variety of circumstances, such as partisan considerations, personal ideology, and by the inherent difficulty of mediating between conflicting goals in a pluralistic society. A smaller but still significant number of respondents suggested that this varies amongst individual politicians. This second view may well represent no more than a variation of the first. Finally, six of the respondents indicated that they believed that the decisions of politicians do not reflect what is good for the public.

3. What Should Politicians Decide for the Agency?

In terms of assessing the issue of democratic control of bureaucracies from a bureaucratic perspective, it is one thing to probe the respondents' views about the general role of politicians in government. However, the issue of the role of the politician with respect to the agency to which a bureaucrat belongs is one which cuts much closer to the bone. This particular issue was explored with the survey respondents by asking them "What kinds of decisions should politicians make with respect to your agency?" By far the greatest response (twenty-four) was that politicians should establish or set roles, mandates, values, operating principles, fiscal guidelines, general policies, strategic plans, or priorities for the agency. It will be noted that the foregoing is very similar to what Gruber's respondents called specifying general outcomes.[12] And with respect to the inclusion of the setting of fiscal guidelines, the survey respondents were in accord with Gruber's findings that bureaucrats see budgetary control by politicians as natural.[13] However, a quarter of the respondents suggested that even the foregoing roles for politicians should be circumscribed in the sense that politicians should make only 'informed' decisions, seek expert advice before making policy, and not make administrative or 'how to' decisions, which were felt to be best left to the administrators. In a way, this reflects the views of Gruber's respondents, who believed that anything but the most general kind of specifying of outcomes was administration.[14]

The total response to this question was, however, not as straightforward as the foregoing paragraph might suggest. There were a total of sixteen responses which indicated that a proper role for politicians was to direct the work of the administration and allocate resources to it. This implies a belief that there must not only be political control of the bureaucracy but as well a willingness to submit to that control. Finally, it should be observed that there is a large measure of consistency in the replies of the survey respondents regarding both the general role of politicians in government and their function vis-à-vis the agency itself.

D. The Function of the Citizen

I turn now to the issue of the role of the citizen in government as seen by the respondents. As indicated earlier, this involves their ideas about the role and function of the citizen with respect to the development and implementation of public policy. These ideas are depicted in their replies to questions about the general role of the citizen in government (Question 9), the kinds of decisions citizens should make with respect to the agency involved (Question 10), whether the citizen knows what is best for him or herself with respect to public policy (Question 12), and whether citizen control over the administration of government is desirable (Question 13).

1. What is the General Role of the Citizen in Government?

This question is intended to elicit a general view of the issue, not to provide specific suggestions for involving the citizen in the process of governance. As in earlier questions, the respondents sometimes provided more than one answer. I have categorized these answers into four groups. The largest group of responses (fifteen) suggest that the proper role for individual in their relationship with government is to work through their elected representatives to achieve their ends. A second large group of responses (fourteen) recommends that the individual should "keep informed" about public issues in order to make valid choices on public issues. This response is consistent with their view that politicians must keep informed in order to make appropriate decisions. This is a point I shall return to later. A smaller but still significant number of responses (seven) suggest that the citizen has no greater responsibility in the process of governance than to vote. The same number of responses allocates no more than an advisory role to the citizen. Looked at in another way, the replies suggest that nearly two thirds of the respondents limit citizen participation to interaction with politicians, while the balance allow the citizen no more than a voting or advisory role.

2. Citizen Involvement in Decision Making.

The answers provided when respondents were asked what kinds of decisions citizens should be involved in with respect to the agency are in line with those concerning the role of the citizen in government generally. In this more pointed question about the role of the citizen in the decision-making process of government, the respondents shifted ground a bit and came down strongly for an advisory or consultative role for the citizen. Twenty-one suggested this. As with earlier questions, multiple answers were permitted and seven respondents proposed as well that citizen involvement should be through elected officials. There were, however, six answers which supported the idea that the citizen should be involved directly in making decisions for and with the agency. These proportions are similar (but not identical) to Gruber's findings that two thirds of the public servants she studied advocated either a supportive role or no role at all for the citizen in the making of public policy.[15]

On the face of it, the foregoing responses leave very little room for citizen participation in the policy-making process. However, the high proportion of responses favouring an advisory or consultative role for the citizen potentially allows for a large measure of citizen influence on public policy making. As Gruber has noted, clients are more likely to influence bureaucratic decisions if they are present when decisions are made so that the agency's client is viewed as an individual and not simply as an abstract case on a file.[16] The foregoing response may well be an illustration of this. On the other hand, this may merely signal the presence of influence rather than control, as I have defined that term earlier.[17]

3. The Citizen and Government Administration.

The final question dealing with the role of the citizen in fashioning public policy deals directly with the issue of the role of the citizen participation in the administration of government. It is an issue that cuts close to the bone for many public administrators. Seven respondents asserted that the citizen should indeed be accorded control over some or all aspects of the administration of government. However, only three of these seven gave an unqualified affirmative answer. The remainder qualified their reply on the basis of one or more of the following reservations: (a) the citizen would have to be fully knowledgeable about the issues involved, (b) the citizen would have to be held accountable for his or her decisions, and (c) measures would have to be established so that the administrative process of government was not hijacked by special interests.

The balance of the respondents (eighteen) indicated that they did not believe that the citizen should be involved in the administration of government. Thirteen of these respondents asserted that the avenue for citizen involvement in government was through the elected officials or by serving on formal advisory or consultative boards established by governments.

The replies regarding the role of the citizen in the formulation of public policy suggest that a key concern of the survey respondents centres around the fact that the citizen is viewed as not having sufficient knowledge to deal effectively with the complex issues that public policy makers must grapple with. This holds true for both positive and negative responses and is consistent with the call for political officials to become knowledgeable described earlier. On the other hand, the tendency to view the citizen as not having a significant role in government suggested by the responses to the questions about the role of the citizen in the administration of government may not be as pronounced as it seems at first glance. The proposal by a large number of respondents that citizens should work through elected officials implies (but does not prove) that the survey respondents recognize and accept the right of politicians to direct (and thus control) the bureaucracy.

4. Does the Citizen Know Best?

Although it is open to a range of interpretations, this question is intended to elicit attitudes on the question of whether individuals are capable of governing themselves. As Gruber has noted, "the heart of a democratic political system is control of the government by the governed"[18] and it is important to ascertain how public servants see this issue.

Only three respondents believed that the individual citizen knows what is best in terms of public policy. Another four suggested that this would depend on the individual citizen. Some would; others would not. Six other respondents stated flatly that the average citizen simply does not know enough to be able to decide on public policy issues. The remainder (twelve) indicated that the average citizen does not know enough to decide upon broad public policy issues but certainly knows what is best for him or herself and that this may be all that is required in some cases.

Threaded throughout the responses to this question is the notion that knowledge is the significant factor in determining whether the individual citizen is in a position to know what is best for the overall good of the community with respect to the making of public policy. This view is totally consistent with the stress the respondents put on the necessity for politicians to keep well informed described earlier in this chapter. It may also be a reflection of the concerns of professionals with what they see as the clumsy efforts of dilettantes to deal with difficult and complex problems.

E. THE PUBLIC GOOD

This part examines the views of the survey respondents on the question of the public good. This notion relates to what Gruber has characterized as "the assumption that there is a determinate public interest"[19] which can be ascertained only through the application of knowledge, expertise, or wisdom. She adds that this means that the rulers, not the citizens, alone possess the knowledge and expertise to govern effectively.[20]

1. Is there a Public Good?

Most respondents thought so. Slightly more than half of them (fourteen) believe that there is indeed a public good. Only one individual dismissed the idea outright. The balance (ten) acknowledged that they were uncertain about the existence of a public good as a concrete entity or suggested that the meaning of this concept would depend in whole or in part on how it was defined and who defined it. This question produced the only significant difference in the responses between males and females. Here females replied in the affirmative twice as often as males who, in turn, were twice as uncertain or expressed reservations as to the value of the concept as females did.

2. What is the Public Good?

Although the respondents articulated their replies in a variety of ways, a small majority (fourteen) suggested that the public good is essentially a variation on the theme of "the greatest good for the greatest number." This would be consistent with Mill's dictum that

> laws and social arrangements should place the happiness or (as speaking practically, it may be called) the interest of every individual as nearly as possible in harmony with the interest of the whole;....[21]

A second group (eight) indicated that the concept of the public good is difficult to define and in any case would change over time and under different circumstances, given that its definition depends upon societal values or public mores. The remaining three respondents provided answers which could not easily be classified. One defined it as altruism, the second as the freedom to conduct one's affairs as one sees fit within a framework which allows others to do the same, and the third indicated that the question was irrelevant.

F. Conclusions

The survey results do not support the hypothesis advanced. Canadian and American administrators share beliefs about the role of the politician and citizen in government. The results do, however, support the hypothesis in terms of their differing views about their own role in public policy development and in the capacity of politicians to serve the public good.

In order to highlight the views expressed by the survey respondents, in this chapter I have not attempted to compare and contrast their views with some of Gruber's major insights and recommendations. This is a task I shall take up in the next chapter.

1. Judith E. Gruber, Controlling Bureaucracies: Dilemmas in Democratic Governance, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp.152-71.

2. Gruber, p. 92.

3. Gruber, pp. 107-08.

4. Gruber, see p. 102 for a description of the views of her respondents on their perceptions of their involvement in policy making. See p. 90 for Gruber's explanation of a bureaucrat's involvement in policy-making: namely, designing and implementing programs, monitoring their operation, and crafting remedies for problems that arise.

5. Gruber, p. 88.

6. Gruber, p. 94.

7. Ibid.

8. Gruber, p. 95. It should be added here that Gruber's study involved selected senior employees of a municipal government in the United States. Moreover, the boards mentioned by Gruber were composed of political appointments.

9. Gruber, p. 95.

10. Gruber, p. 110.

11. Gruber, p. 113.

12. Gruber, p. 110.

13. Gruber, p. 172.

14. Ibid.

15. Gruber, pp. 95-96.

16. Gruber, p. 209.

17. See pp. 8-10 of Chapter One for that definition.

18. Gruber, p. 1.

19. Gruber, p. 35.

20. Ibid.

21. John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, ed. Oskar Piest, (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1957), p. 22.

CHAPTER FIVE

Democratic Control and Bureaucratic Power: Conclusions and Proposals for Change

A. Introduction

In this chapter I shall first of all summarize the major points which emerged from my survey of the beliefs of the respondents about the issue of democratic control of bureaucracies in Canada. I shall also comment on what my findings mean for both the political officials who would control the bureaucracies and the bureaucrats who submit to that control or find ways to evade it.

B. Summary of Survey Results

Gruber tells us that "Bureaucrats rarely think of themselves as public officials. Rather, they see themselves as people at work,...."[1] With respect to their work environment, the public servants who participated in my survey tend to see themselves as separate from both politicians and citizens. This would seem to confirm Gruber's foregoing observation. In addition, the survey respondents, much like Gruber's subjects, tend to view political control as being appropriate in setting the general agendas of government, but not as extending to administrative or operational matters.[2] And, also like Gruber's respondents,[3] the controls which affect them most directly are internal ones. Thirdly, much like the public servants surveyed by the Service to the Public Task Force established by the federal government (and also like those who participated in Gruber's study) virtually all survey respondents declared themselves to be "highly committed to serving the public."[4]

The survey respondents generally saw the politician's primary responsibility as being to help his or her constituents. However, most also agreed that politicians should direct the work of government, particularly (but not exclusively) in the broad sense of setting general goals and priorities for government. In addition, a majority believe that politicians do indeed act in ways which reflect what is best for the public, or attempt to do so most of the time. This is in marked contrast with Gruber's findings, which suggest that bureaucrats see themselves as the guardians of the public interest in face of the particular interests of politicians[5] and the individualistic demands of the citizen, whom they regard as being "unable to discern what is best"[6] in deciding upon public policy. In addition, unlike Gruber's sample,[7] most asserted that they have a significant influence on the development of public policy.

Although most of the survey respondents expressed their firm commitment to serving the public, they did not, on the whole, support the notion of direct public participation in government. Most said that the individual citizen should work through his or her elected representative or should participate by serving on boards, committees, or other formal bodies. And nearly 90 per cent of them are opposed to citizen control of any part of the administrative functions of government, or approve of it with serious reservations. In addition, the majority do not believe that the average citizen possesses the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions with respect to public policy, although half of them acknowledge that the citizen does indeed know what is best for himself or herself individually. What we see at work here is the reliance of professionals in their ability to define what is best for society surmounting their undoubted commitment to serving the public. This intellectual dissonance appears to have escaped the notice of the respondents.

There was one issue raised by most respondents which deserves mention, even though it was not called for as a response to any of the questions. That is that knowledge is the most significant factor in determining who should participate in the policy-making process. A significant majority of the survey respondents (twenty-two) believe that the average citizen simply does not know enough to be able to make informed decisions on public policy issues, even though some acknowledged that the citizen might well know what is best for his or her particular interests. The respondents were consistent on this point, stressing that politicians must also keep well informed if they are to make good policy decisions. This is likely a reflection of the professional concern of senior public servants who know how difficult it can be to devise policies which are both politically acceptable to the citizenry and feasible in terms of accommodating conflicting interests, complying with existing legislation, and conforming to shrinking budget allocations by governments.

That viewpoint is not in itself inimical to the ideal of democratic government. Indeed, in today's complex world, effective decision-making requires the application of the best knowledge available. And yet, if one acknowledges that the citizen does not know enough to properly decide on public policy, and if the average politician needs to be better informed, who then is qualified to decide? The assumption which underlies this perspective is that only the professional bureaucrats possess the necessary skills. I should add that this view was never articulated overtly and is probably not even acknowledged, at least not consciously. Nevertheless, the notion that both citizens and politicians are not sufficiently knowledgeable about public policy issues does invite that kind of conclusion. It also suggests the existence of a view that Dahl has called guardianship, or rule by persons who are qualified to do so by virtue of their superior knowledge, as the ordinary citizen cannot be counted on to understand the interests of the larger society.[8]

On many issues, the respondents displayed a homogeneity of response. This was not totally unexpected. I deliberately chose individuals whose positions and functions suggested some actual or potential direct involvement in the development of public policy. In addition, this homogeneity is perhaps attributable to the effects of similar working environments. For instance, all the respondents are or were employed in large public organizations with similar, though not identical, organizational structures, and most of which, as I indicated in Chapter One, provide a service directly to individuals. Moreover, with the exception of the Managers, they are involved in the policy process in much the same way.

The foregoing suggests that there may well be some educational and job environment acculturation at work here. It may also reflect Gruber's notion that the demands of the job attract individuals with certain kinds of skills or with similar beliefs or convictions. In addition, some of the responses suggest that there may be an ethos of service to the public at work as well. The following quotes from respondent statements will serve as examples of the latter: "First and foremost, the agency's clients....Everything else is secondary."

"Ultimately and most importantly, the people of Alberta and Canada." And "My job is to translate the program and service delivery criteria of the agency into practical measures to meet the needs of the agency's clients."[9]

It is also clear that the public servants who participated in my survey do not see themselves as parts of what may be called a traditional bureaucracy. That is, one where public servants merely implement initiatives decided upon by the political actors. On the contrary, most of the respondents consider themselves to be an integral part of the policy-making process, not simply as administrative implementers of policies decided upon by others. In other words, they believe that they are in fact part of the process of governance in the sense that their ideas and opinions serve to influence the direction of public policy. In that sense, they differ significantly from Gruber's subjects, who saw themselves as being outside the policy-making loop.[10]

Given that the Canadian respondents see themselves as an integral part of the policy-making process, the particular kind of alienation from that process described by Gruber[11] does not exist for them. In their experience, political and citizen control is diluted to some extent, although it is certainly not seen as absent, as evidenced by the number of respondents who identified a minister as one of the controlling elements in their work environment. This would perhaps suggest that what exists for them is the kind of contention between bureaucrats and politicians described by Putnam.[12] However, their belief that politicians should exercise control over the governmental apparatus (even if only in a general way) and their assumption that the initiatives of politicians on the whole accurately reflect what is best for the public (even though many have important reservations about this) appear to suggest that they do not see themselves as adversaries to politicians, as do the French bureaucrats studied by Suleiman.[13] Nor do the respondents appear to harbour the antiparliamentarian mentality that Suleiman attributes to the French bureaucracy, although they do exhibit a similar attitude that neither the politicians nor the individual citizen know enough about the technical aspects of any issue to make the best possible decisions.[14] On this point, it is probable that the assessment of the inabilities of politicians and the public expressed by the survey participants is, as Suleiman has observed, more the irritation of professionals with what they see as the clumsy efforts of dilettantes to resolve difficult and complex problems rather than with any hostility in principle about political or societal control of their activities.[15]

I now wish to comment briefly on the survey results as they relate to Gruber's notion of control as exchange. The survey questionnaire (See Appendix A) did not address the issue directly, nor do the replies provide a clear indication of whether the respondents accept or reject the notion, nor whether Gruber's model would be more or less appropriate in a Canadian setting. However, the survey results do show that the Canadian public servants have a more positive view of the role and legitimacy of politicians than did their American counterparts who participated in Gruber's study. From this, one might infer that an exchange paradigm might be less antagonistic in Canada than in the United States. On the other hand, both groups clearly see themselves as the administrative and technical experts in government and, as such, believe that they should carry out their duties as free from political or citizen restraint as possible. This could lead to conflict under an exchange model, particularly where the citizens or politicians desired changes that bureaucrats disapproved of. No further hypothesis can be drawn from my survey on this point.

C. Comments and Examples

As I indicated earlier in this chapter, unlike the participants in Grubers's study, the survey respondents clearly see themselves as significant partners in the process of governance. This corresponds well with the recommendation of the Public Policy Forum in its report entitled Making Government Work which calls for structural changes aimed at improving relations between senior public servants and parliamentarians[16] and confirms that public servants do indeed engage in the process of governance as partners and not solely as subordinate implementers of policies formulated by others. Again, this does not square completely with what Gruber sees as effective democratic control of bureaucracies. That is, one imposed by politicians or the citizen.[17] On the other hand, it may coincide to a degree with her notion of control as exchange. In such a partnership, the bureaucrats would exchange some degree of the anonymity and protection they now enjoy for a greater legitimation of their role in government.

Do governments control their bureaucracies? Probably not in the sense that Gruber defines control. For instance, Cairns' assertion that the administration of many policies is beyond the effective control of any Prime Minister[18] suggests that politicians do not always fully control their public bureaucracies. In addition, Wood's examination of the struggle between the Environmental Protection Agency bureaucrats and the Reagan Administration in the United States[19] demonstrates that under certain circumstances bureaucrats can indeed successfully defy their political masters. And in a Canadian context, MacDonald,[20] Axworthy,[21] and Dick,[22] ministers in the Clark, Trudeau, and Mulroney administrations respectively, have all complained of systematic and calculated attempts by their respective bureaucracies to frustrate their efforts to introduce significant policy changes in their departments.

In addition to frustrating the initiatives of elected officials, bureaucrats also promote their own policy agendas. For instance, Berle notes that what he calls 'lower-echelon' officials in the United States State Department questioned a direct order of President Kennedy and would have disobeyed it had not Kennedy's personal representative to Latin America forced the issue. He also says that on another occasion these officials failed to deliver a message President Kennedy had requested be sent.[23] Berle argues that in both these instances, the Department of State bureaucrats involved were not carrying out the policies of their legitimate political master (President Kennedy) but rather promoting their own.[24] A more recent example of bureaucrats promoting their own public policy preferences was revealed in two recent newspaper articles.[25] According to these accounts, a number of what were termed "middle-level civil servants in one of the middle-sized departments"[26] have formed a clandestine group to foster public debate about the Alberta government's efforts to eliminate the province's deficit.[27] If accurately reported, these individuals reject the elected government's approach and ridicule the consultative process the Klein government has put in place to allow citizens to participate in the process as insincere.[28]

In place of the politicians' initiatives, they propose a number of alternatives which clash directly with the government's stated intentions.[29] This represents a clear case of insubordination to the elected officials by a group ostensibly dedicated to serving the government of the day. If correctly reported, it represents a political act, not an administrative one. The issue here is not whether the bureaucrats' proposals represent a superior alternative. That may well be the case. It may also be that this is no more than an attempt by individuals to protect their interests under the status quo. What is at issue, though, is whether the political control of the province is to be in the hands of elected officials accountable to the voters or under the control of bureaucrats accountable only to whatever sense of public service they may possess.

I acknowledge, however, that politicians are not powerless in conflicts of this kind. They have, of course, the legal right to enact legislation which dismantles parts of the public service or assigns public functions over to private sector operators. Or, in extreme circumstances, the can force public servants back to work in the event of a strike, as the federal government did in 1991. But such action, Gruber reminds us, entails significant control costs.[30]

The evidence from both the survey and the literature implies that governments in Canada do not control their bureaucracies in the sense that Gruber defines that term. The question then becomes: Is this appropriate or not? There are two possible ways of looking at this. The first consists of taking a normative approach. Here one needs to decide whether the purpose of government is primarily to protect the liberty of the individual or to coordinate societal efforts to serve collective ends.[31] These notions can be equated with what Isaiah Berlin has called negative freedom and positive freedom.[32] If one believes in the former, the conditions I have described above may give cause for concern, since the individual's freedom is indeed curtailed by the functioning of the bureaucracy. If, however, one accepts the latter view, the issue vanishes, since the question then becomes one of the effective use of power.

On the other hand, given the size and heterogeneity of modern democratic states and the complexity of the issues facing their governments, to advocate that the individual citizen (or even the elected officials) be directly involved in all public policy decisions would likely lead to vast inefficiencies, even if it were to actually allow full public control over public bureaucracies. In other words, the social costs of such control practices would be too high. This is what Gruber means when she writes about the costs of control.[33] The question then becomes: What do politicians and the individual Canadian need to do to ensure that the public bureaucracies created to serve them remain responsive to their wishes, while at the same time assuring that the administrative and political skills of professional bureaucrats are not stymied by ill-advised control measures?

Although this thesis did not examine it, a related question which suggests itself is: How do the politicians see the role of bureaucrats in government? As I indicated in Chapter One,[34] Canadians in general believe that bureaucrats should be subordinate to political leaders. Official government statements on the issue are scarce. But at least two governments have articulated a position. First, the Mulroney administration's White Paper on the renewal of the federal public service issued in December 1990, outlines that government's position as follows:

> When all is said and done ... in our system ministers are elected to decide whereas officials are appointed to administer and advise.[35]

In addition, a bulletin put out by the Alberta Government Personnel Administration Office to all provincial employees contains the following statement:

> The Alberta government has adopted a vision, a mission statement, and a set of values as a guide to the work of every government employee. Your departments have similar goals and principles that help steer the business you do, and the way in which you do it. Combined, they serve to ensure we're working towards the same results.[36]

Both these statements betray a belief in the traditional view that politicians decide, and that bureaucrats do no more than advise politicians and implement policy. Neither acknowledges that bureaucracies, as institutions, are power wielders in their own right, with at least a measure of control over their own actions. Nor do these statements square with the experience of the respondents to the survey. Nearly all of them viewed themselves as having a significant influence on the determination of public policy, either in terms of overall agency activities, or with respect to those of their branch or unit. At the very least, this suggests that at least these public servants see themselves as participants in the policy-making process, something that their political masters do not appear to agree with.

However, another view appears to be emerging. In June of 1993, the Public Policy Forum, a public policy think tank sponsored in part by the Canadian government and the governments of British Columbia and Ontario, recommended that "the relationship between public servants, Ministers and Parliamentarians...." be clarified.[37] In addition, the Forum also suggested that "Consideration should also be given to structural changes for the purpose of providing greater scope for initiative and entrepreneurship"[38] by public servants. Taken together, these proposals suggest that the decision-making role of bureaucrats in the formulation of public policy should not only be expanded but also openly recognized.

The conclusion one can draw from the evidence presented in this thesis is that, in general, politicians (as well as a majority of Canadians) believe that the role of bureaucracy in government is limited to providing advice and implementing policies decided upon by politicians. Bureaucrats, though, appear to hold a different view.

D. Recommendations

In the first place, like Plasse,[39] I believe that the time has come to abandon the traditional view (and the structures and policies that grow out of it) that politicians make policy and that bureaucracies do no more than implement it, in favour of a paradigm that explicitly acknowledges the role of the bureaucracy in the public policy-making process. In a Canadian context, this may include a rethinking of the principles of ministerial responsibility and of the political neutrality of the public service.

With respect to the issue of ministerial responsibility, it should be pointed out that ministers, particularly at the federal level, have their authority to impose sanctions on individual workers, let alone whole departments or units, limited in a number of ways. For instance, their deputy ministers are appointed by the Prime Minister and are thus not only beholden to that office but also cannot be removed by a minister without the Prime Minister's consent. In addition, as was mentioned in Chapter Two, in some cases legislation gives deputy ministers certain authorities of their own which are not dependent on a delegation by the minister. Moreover, certain departmental functions, such as personnel and finance, are governed by legislation beyond a minister's personal control.[40] In like manner, at the federal level there is legislation which allows trade union activity. That translates into institutionalized protection for public servants and must perforce limit ministerial discretion in dealing with them.

With respect to the notion of the political neutrality of public servants in Canada, the evidence seems to suggest that, despite pressure for them to do so from some quarters, governments have generally abstained from politicizing their public service, as this is generally understood. However, as I have also argued earlier, there is evidence to suggest that the politicization of the public service may be taking place in ways which were not anticipated, that have not yet been properly examined, and for which no corrective measures yet exist.

Secondly, I believe that governments need to change legislation and procedures to better specify the functions, obligations, accountabilities, and protections for both politicians and bureaucrats serving at all levels of the public service. In the words of the report of the Public Policy Forum entitled Making Government Work, we need to "Clarify the relationship between public servants, Ministers and Parliamentarians."[41] Sutherland, in her examination of the events surrounding the Al-Mashat Affair, argues that in deciding to have the enquiry into that episode carried out by a parliamentary committee with powers to directly question the public servants involved, the Mulroney government not only assumed that administration is "quite distinct from politics,....[42] but that it also did the public servants concerned an injustice in that it held them to account in a forum where they lacked any standing and institutionalized protection.[43] This recommendation would address both of these quite legitimate objections. It would also accommodate Sossin's apprehension about the legitimacy of public administrators,[44] as well as my own concerns about the current limitations placed on ministers' ability to properly manage their departments and the apparent politicization of the bureaucracy (at least at the federal level) associated with the growth of public sector unions.

Thirdly, governments should change both legislation and administrative practices so as to generate greater public participation through formally established bodies with real decision-making powers in specified limited areas. By this I do not mean that the authority of Parliament would be diluted but rather that Parliament should, as suggested by the Public Policy Forum, define the subject matter to be assigned to this process, name the appropriate participants, set out the objectives to be achieved, the processes to be employed, and the timetables for action,[45] then allow the participants to do the job they are tasked with. And finally, again as the Public Policy Forum suggests, Parliament itself would be accountable to review and evaluate the work of these bodies and would retain its traditional authority to make changes. In short, what I am proposing here has much in common with what Kernaghan has described as a collaborative partnership between governments and their citizens.[46]

As I indicated in Chapter Four, a majority of the survey respondents signified that they believed in bringing members of the public into the governing process through formally established advisory or consultative bodies.[47] I recognize that my proposal would go beyond what the survey respondents said they would be comfortable with. However, the two positions are certainly not mutually exclusive. If the roles and responsibilities of the players were to be specified as I have suggested, public servants might well be comfortable with public participation in government which would go beyond strictly advisory or consultative functions. In that case, one can assume that they would cooperate in making such a process work effectively. In addition, the very fact that bureaucrats and citizens would be required to interact in face-to-face situations would, as Gruber suggests, mean that citizens would become more a of a part of the bureaucrats' frame of reference for making policy decisions.[48] And that, Gruber notes, means that the citizen would exert more influence on bureaucratic decisions.

My final recommendation is more comprehensive in nature and could apply in conjunction with, and in support of, all of my other proposals. I believe that politicians (and perhaps to a lesser degree, individual citizens) should appeal to the commitment to serving the public exposed in the survey. That message was clear, unequivocal, and consistent for all the respondents. In addition, over a lifetime in the public service I have myself frequently heard the same theme from public servants at all levels in the hierarchy. And what is more, I have witnessed its application in action on countless occasions. What I have in mind here is using the carrot of suasion rather than the stick of bureaucrat-bashing in order to encourage public servants to accept a greater degree of public control.

I believe that my recommendations would enhance the citizen's control over the administrative apparatus of the state (the bureaucracy), both directly and through the politicians. If properly implemented, they would sacrifice neither Parliament's right and responsibility to govern nor the benefits of the administrative and technical expertise resident in the bureaucracy. Moreover, they would ensure that the individual Canadians who work in our public bureaucracies would not be exposed to either the personal degradation suffered by the senior federal public servants involved in the Al-Mashat Affair[49] or the ruinous effects of the kind of litigation that Wise says face their American counterparts.[50] On the other hand, neither would they be vested with the power attributed to the officials of the European Community[51] nor accorded the kind of institutional protection envisaged by Napoleon Bonaparte for the French civil service mentioned in Chapter Two.[52] Nor would my proposals involve a dilution of the powers and prerogatives of Parliament or a change in the relationships between the citizen and politician. Because of the inherent weakness I believe an exchange system exhibits in an environment of scarcity, I do not, like Gruber, suggest that approach in order to achieve democratic control over public bureaucracies. Rather, I seek to build a solid partnership between them, grounded on clear definitions of the roles and responsibilities of the citizen, the politician, and the bureaucrat which can thrive in either prosperity or adversity.

As I indicated in Chapter Four, my survey of public servants in Alberta failed to fully support my hypothesis that Canadian and American bureaucrats think differently about democratic control of bureaucracies inasmuch as it suggests that they share beliefs regarding the role of both politicians and citizens in government.[53] On the other hand, in terms of their divergent beliefs about the role of public servants in the development of public policy, and of the capacity of politicians to serve the public good, my survey tends to confirm the hypothesis. The problem is obviously more complex than appears at first glance. Nonetheless, both Gruber's analysis and my own research may help illuminate a rather indistinct image and provide a basis for the reform of our administrative institutions in Canada.

1. Judith E. Gruber, Controlling Bureaucracies: Dilemmas in Democratic Governance, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988), p. 152.

2. Gruber, p. 110.

3. Gruber, pp. 107-08.

4. Public Service 2000: Service to the Public Task force Report, (n.p., October, 1990), pp. 3 and 83.

5. Gruber, p. 113.

6. Gruber, p. 117.

7. Gruber, p. 102.

8. Robert A. Dahl, Democracy and Its Critics, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 52.

9. These quotes have been modified slightly to mask the identity of the respondents but the essential message has been retained.

10. Gruber, p. 102.

11. Ibid.

12. Robert D. Putnam, "Bureaucrats and Politicians: Contending Elites in the Policy Process," in Perspectives on Public Policy Making, eds. William B. Gwyn and George C. Edwards III, (New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1975), pp. 181-82.

13. Ezra N. Suleiman, Politics, Power, and Bureaucracy in France: The Administrative Elite, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 137.

14. Suleiman, p. 287.

15. Ibid.

16. Making Government Work, (Ottawa: The Public Policy Forum, 1993), p. 14.

17. Gruber, p. 12.

18. Alan Cairns, "The Embedded State: State Society Relations in Canada," in State and Society: Canada in Comparative Perspective, Research Coordinator Keith Banting, (Toronto:

University of Toronto Press, 1986), p. 69.

19. B. Dan Wood, "Principals, Bureaucrats, and Responsiveness in Clean Air Enforcements," in American Political Science Review, Vol. 82, No. 1, March 1988, pp. 213-34.

20. Flora MacDonald, "The Minister and the Mandarins: How a New Minister Copes With the Entrapment Devices of Bureaucracy," in Policy Options, Vol. 1, 1980, pp. 29-31.

21. Lloyd Axworthy, "Control of Policy," in Policy Options, April, 1985, pp. 17-20.

22. Duncan Thorne, "Open tendering faces 'hijack' by mandarins," Edmonton Journal, February 17, 1992.

23. Adolf A. Berle, Power, (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, Inc., 1969), pp. 112-13.

24. Berle, p. 113.

25. Linda Goyette, "Civil servants challenge Klein government's approach to budget cuts," in the Edmonton Journal, October 21, 1993, p. A-10; and "Premier Klein could benefit from a free-wheeling public debate," in the Edmonton Journal, October 27, 1993, p. A-14.

26. Linda Goyette, "Civil servants challenge Klein government's approach to budget cuts."

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Linda Goyette, "Premier Klein could benefit from a free-wheeling public debate."

30. Gruber, see particularly Chapter Three, "The Costs of Control," pp. 61-84.

31. Gruber, p. 49.

32. Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in Four Essays on Liberty, (1969; rpt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 118-72. See particularly pp. 122-34.

33. Gruber, see particularly Chapter Three, "The Costs of Control," pp.61-84.

34. See page 7, Chapter One of this Thesis, particularly paragraph 2.

35. Public Service 2000: The Renewal of the Public Service of Canada, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1990), p. 8. Italics and ellipsis in original. This is also a quote from an earlier document entitled Responsibility in the Constitution, (Ottawa: August, 1977), prepared by the Privy Council Office and presented to the Royal Commission on Financial Management and Accountability.

36. Transition II: The New Way of Doing Business, (n.p. Alberta Personnel Administration Office, February 25, 1994), p. 8.

37. Making Government Work, p. 14.

38. Ibid.

39. Micheline Plasse, "Les chefs de cabinets ministériels du gouvernement fédéral canadien: rôle et relation avec la haute fonction publique, in Canadian Public Administration, Vol. 35, No. 3, 1992, pp. 317-38.

40. In a federal government context, this refers to Treasury Board Regulations or those of the federal Public Service Commission.

41. Making Government Work, p. 12.

42. S.L. Sutherland, "The Al-Mashat Affair," in Canadian Public Administration, Vol. 34, No. 4, p. 585.

43. Ibid., and p. 295.

44. Lorne Sossin, "The politics of discretion: toward a critical theory of public administration," in Canadian Public Administration, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 364-91. Sossin expresses his concern this way: "Administrators have none of the legitimacy of representative officials on the one hand, and none of the legitimacy of judicial authority and legal reasoning on the other." p. 383.

45. Making Government Work, p. 5.

46. Kenneth Kernaghan, "Partnership and public administration: conceptual and practical considerations," in Canadian Public Administration, Vol. 36, No. 1, p. 62.

47. See pp. 81-84 of Chapter Four.

48. Gruber, p. 209. Gruber actually uses the term "the Bureaucrat's reference group" in this instance, but the meaning is the same.

49. Sutherland, pp. 573-603.

50. Charles R. Wise, "Suits Against Federal Employees for Constitutional Violations: A Search for Reasonableness," in Public Administration Review, Vol. 45, No. 6, November/December, 1985, pp. 845-56.

51. John Logue, "Of Maastricht, Social Democratic Dilemmas, and Linear Cucumbers," in Scandinavian Studies, Fall, 1992, Vol. 64, No. 4, p. 637.

52. Ezra N. Suleiman, Politics, Power, and Bureaucracy in France: The Administrative Elite, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 13.

53. For an earlier discussion of this topic, see Robert Presthus and William Monopoli, "Bureaucracy in the United States and Canada: Social, Attitudinal and Behavioral Variables," in International Journal of Comparative Sociology, XVIII, 1-2, pp. 1276-190.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONAIRE

1. Please Describe briefly the job you do.

2. a. Who sets the limits on what you do on the job?

   b. What kinds of limits?

3. Whom do you believe you serve in your job?

4. How much influence do you have over policy development?

5. What is the role of the politician in government?

6. How well do you think the average politician understands what you do?

7. What kinds of decisions should politicians make with respect to your agency?

8. How well does the average citizen understands what you do?

9. What is the role of the citizen in government?

10. What kinds of decisions should citizens be involved in (if any) with respect to your agency?

11. In general, do politicians accurately reflect what is best for the public in terms of public policy?

12. In general, do you think that most of the time individual citizens know what is best for themselves with respect to public policy?

13. Would it be a good idea to increase popular participation in, and control over, the administration of government?

14. Do you think that there is such a thing as the public interest?

15. If so, what is it?

APPENDIX B

REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW

10304-64 Sreet
Edmonton, Alberta
T6A 2N6

March 12, 1993

Dear __________:

First of all, I want to thank you for your assistance and support in agreeing to an interview on the subject of democratic control of bureaucracies, which is the topic of my thesis in a political science masters program at the University of Alberta.

As I indicated in earlier today, I attach for your prior review a copy of the questionnaire I have developed for this project.

I also want to assure you that your responses to this questionnaire are not for attribution, will remain confidential, and will be blended with the responses of a couple dozen other respondents for the purposes of my study.

As we agreed, I shall call on you at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, March 26, 1993 for our interview.

Once again, my most sincere thanks for your assistance with this project. It is much appreciated.

Yours truly,

Real L. Gagne